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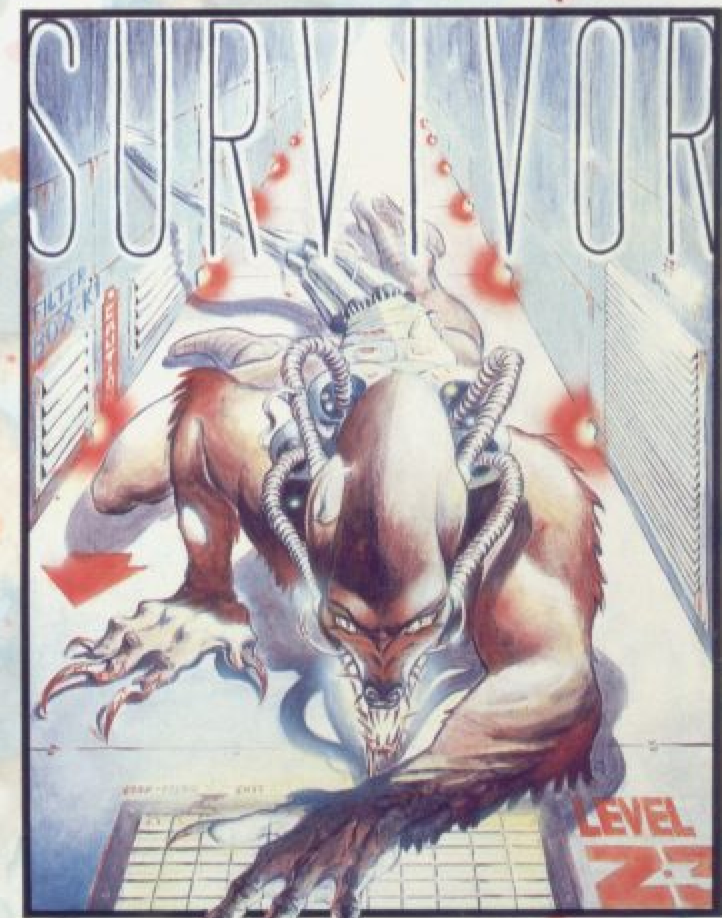
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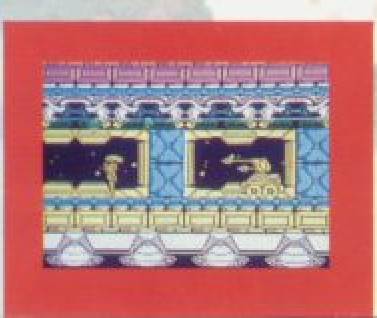
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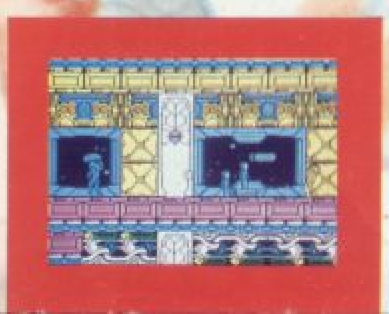
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▲ Zynaps



▲ Livingstone, I Presume!

BUDGET

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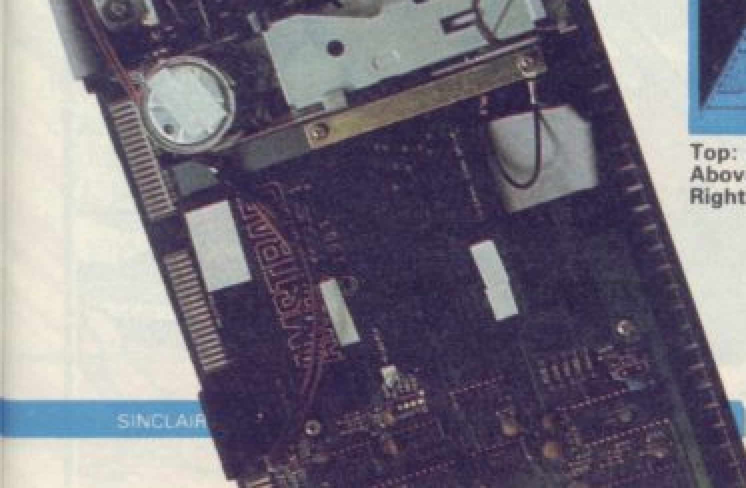
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COVER SMASH



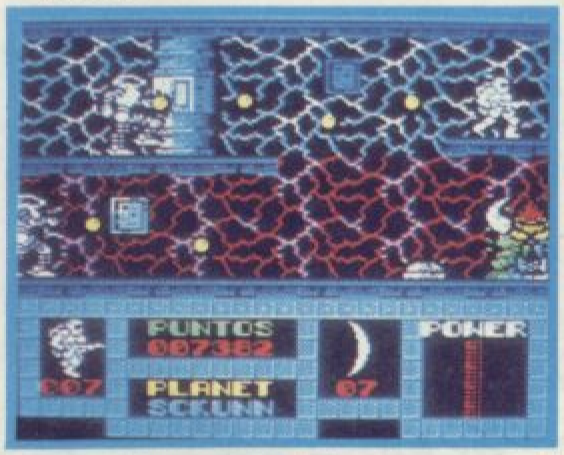
EXCLUSIVE FULL 128K+3 TEST

In just a few weeks now the first Spectrum with a built-in disc drive will be in the shops. What's it like? We give you the definitive low-down

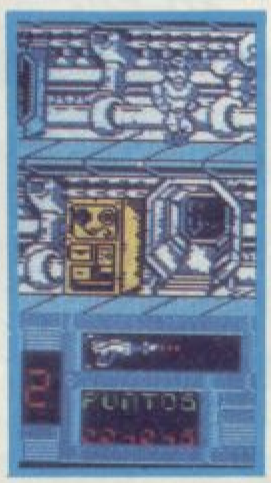


MEGA-PREVIEW

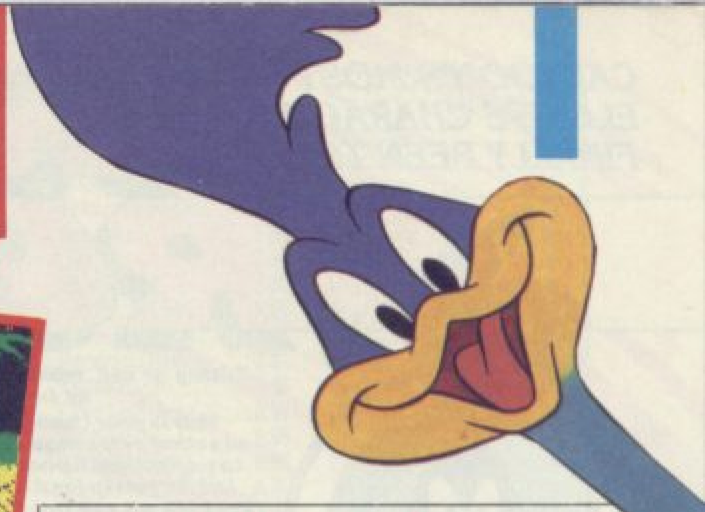
Army Moves' author, Dinamic, has been working hard for Ocean. And SU's spies have got an exclusive preview of Freddy Hardest, After the War, Game Over and yet more







Top: Game Over
Above: Basket Master
Right: Freddy Hardest



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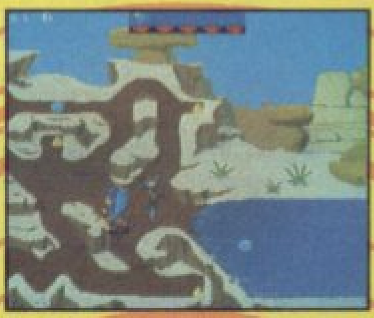
We're sure you'll overcome all the dirty tricks he can throw at you with ease, agility and grace and a haughty "Beep Beep". Overcome them that is if you've got nerves of steel, the reflexes of a wildcat and the speed of the fastest bird on two legs, otherwise its sorry, goodnight and "Burp Burp"!!!

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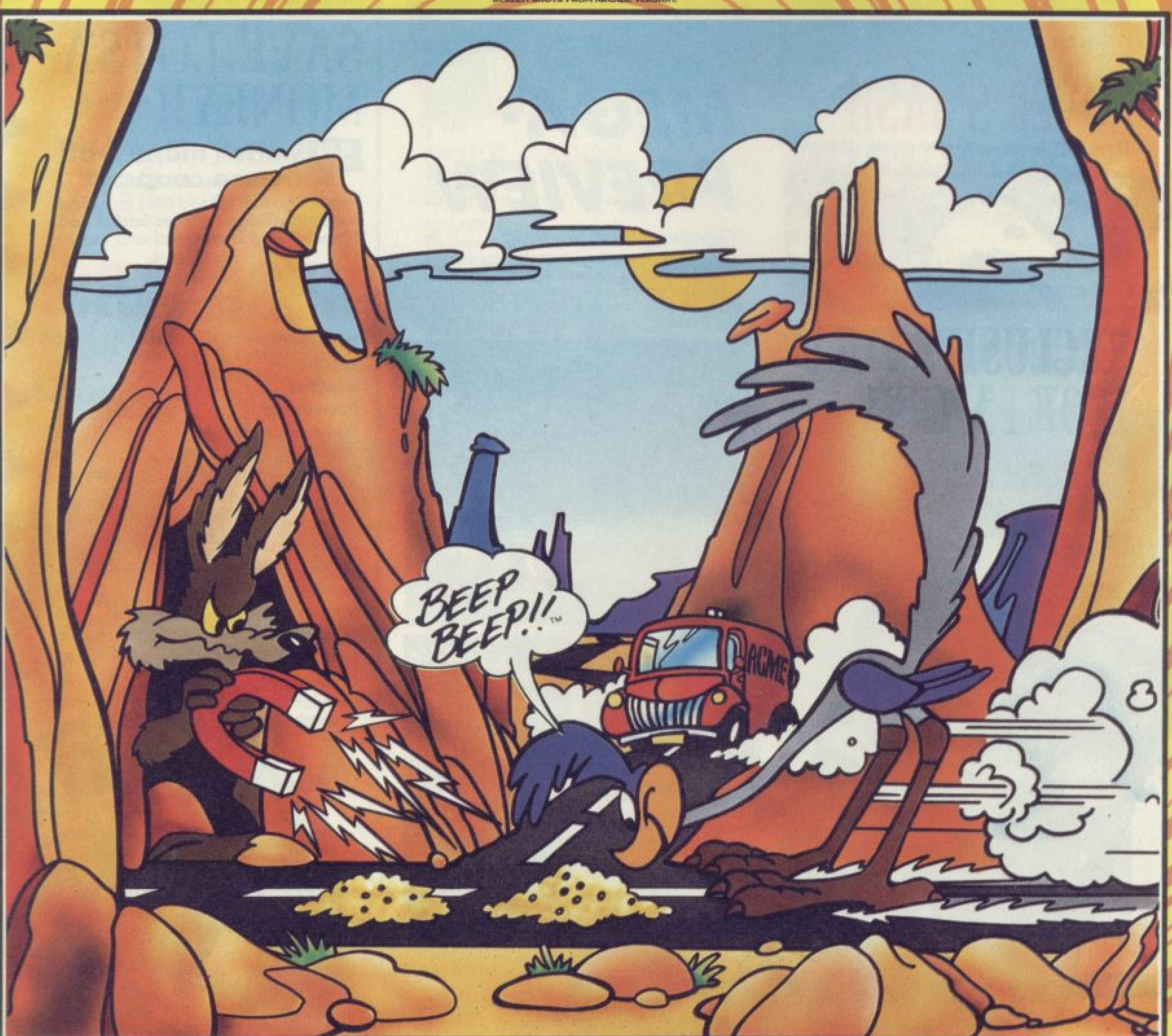




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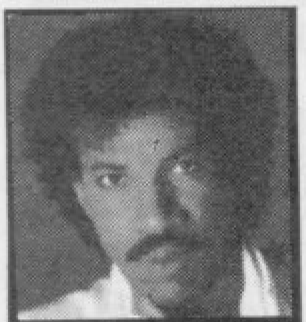
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Konami's Golf Imagine

I'm one of those highly intelligent lads who totally ignores your ratings, and in the case of Konami's Golf I was completely right. It's the most dreadful piece of junk that I have ever had the displeasure of playing. After a few hours of volume twiddling I eventually met the title screen. Quickly pressing on, I found myself on the green, ready to let loose my golfing ability. Looks easy enough I said, and how right I was. I found watching how to make a pancake on Blue Peter harder. In fact, despite my complete lack of golfing knowledge, I still managed to finish it at 1 under par■

N Garland
Belgium
Game Choice:
Silent Service



Jailbreak Konami

Five stars! How could you give Jailbreak five stars? It's a major disaster. After playing for an hour I'm bored with it. It's difficult and monotonous. Being a cop is certainly not easy,



especially when the criminals only die when you shoot them in the head. Standing within a foot of a criminal will result in instant death. The graphics are awful and the screen scroll is very jerky. Surely Konami has heard of smooth scrolling!■

Patrick Saunders
Bath
Game Choice:
Enduro Racer

Saboteur Durrell

Why didn't you like Saboteur II. I was amazed at how good it really was. You don't have lives, but energy. The graphics are big, and the animation of the pumas is amazing! Beating the androids to



death is ace! Action could be a little faster but nevertheless it is well worth the asking price. The tune is great and I can't stop playing it! So show sense and buy it!!!■

Martin Hayes
Birmingham
Game Choice
Nemesis the Warlock



Eastenders Macsen

Warning all Spectrum owners and Eastenders fans! Do not, I repeat, do not purchase Eastenders from Macsen. It's the most trashy pathetic, unadulterated rubbish I've ever had the misfortune to play. Macsen should be ashamed of putting it out at £9.95. At budget price it's still a rip-off. What could be more boring than ordering fruit, putting a baby to sleep, visiting a fruit stall and cutting weeds on a computer game? You gave it one star and I give it minus five stars. I've burned my copy because I'm ashamed to have it in my house. It should carry a Public Health warning■

Mark Summers
Bedfordshire
Game Choice:
Ranarama



Footballer of the Year Gremlin Graphics

I think Terry Pratt lived up to his name, only giving Footballer of the Year one star. It at least deserves three or four. On the goal-scoring screen the sprites are pretty good, and there is no colour clash. The menu screen is ace with lots of different symbols. The loading screen is brill (but a bit squashed). The sound (what there is of it) isn't bad. If you've got £7.95 rush out and buy it and spend the rest of your life playing it■

Steve Sidebottom
Doncaster
Game Choice:
Nemesis

Fued Bulldog Software

I am writing about Feud by Bulldog Software. In SU it got four stars and in other mags it got brill, fab, great graphics. But great graphics don't make a great game. I admit it's well worth the couple of quid asked but I found the game play boring■

Sean Mellor
Sheffield
Game Choice:
Nemesis





Fat Worm Blows a Sparky Durrell

Yet again SU has given a trash review to a brilliant game. I am, of course, referring to Fat Worm Blows a Sparky. It has everything: excellent graphics, great gameplay and it's ORIGINAL – yet you only give it three stars. What are you doing? It deserves five at least. If you haven't already I suggest you go out and buy it■

John Arnold
West Yorks
Game Choice:
Mercenery

Shao-Lin's Road The Edge

It's the worst computer game since Manic Miner. I only bought it because I read the review in January SU. How could Graham Talor (idiot) give it four stars? I keep Shao-Lin's Road under the carpet because I can't stand it anymore. Why does everyone have to be the same colour??? I've only played it five times and that's enough to know that it is not worth £7.95. Out of five I would give it minus two. The only good thing is the loading screen, the best I've seen this year■

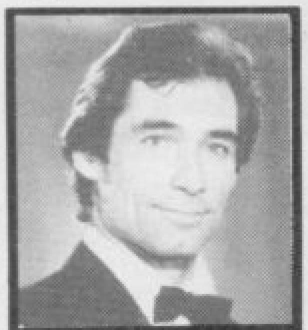
Harry Bozadjian
Wembley
Game Choice:
World Games



The WRITE STUFF?!

Arkanoid
Ocean

How Arkanoid managed to become a classic baffles me. After the screen shots, I thought 'this has cobwebs on it'. However, trying very hard not to judge book by cover I played a friend's copy. I still remained un-



moved. 'But the extras' I hear you cry. Are these extras really indicative of the five years development since Breakout – rolling Hedex tablets with blurred letters? And the ball's shadow looks like a black draught excluder. My final gripe (since my 150 words are almost up); whose idea was it to include and repeat that storyline? He should be condemned to a life of playing Eastenders. Be warned unsuspecting public – avoid Arkanoid■

Peter Whelerton
Cleveland
Game Choice:
Sidney Affair



Little Computer People 128
Activision

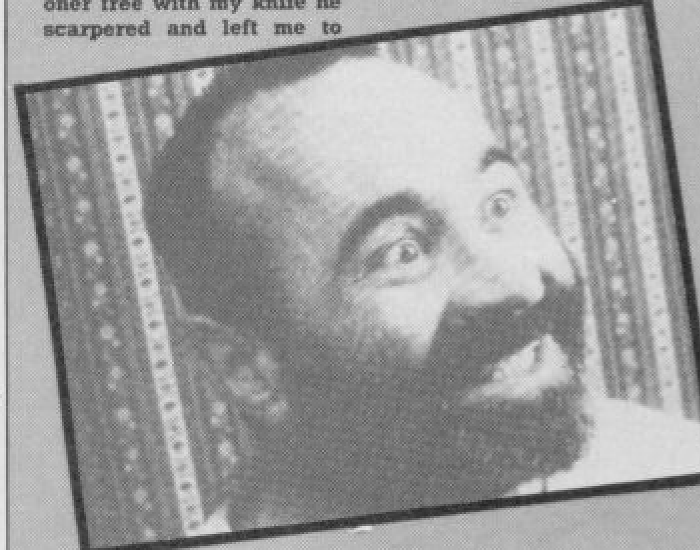
I think Graham Taylor did a fairly good job on his review of 'LCP'. It has good graphics, great use of 128K sound (mainly the piano) and it's presented in a very professional way. The actual concept of the game, (a pet man living inside your Spectrum 128) is great. But it's the same routine the whole time, and when you play cards with your LCP it's completely biased. After a few days the whole thing becomes boring. Despite all this I'd have given it four stars■

Daniel Perkin
Reading
Game Choice:
Head over Heels

Rambo
Ocean

What a load of old rubbish! I find listening to Barry Manilow more interesting. And isn't it a bit silly using half the screen for a name and life's space? How can anyone kill those idiots prancing about with guns? I couldn't hit them from 1cm away. The scrolling is terrible and the music is too horrible to think about. When I set the prisoner free with my knife he scarpered and left me to face the music! Now I enjoy killing him with whatever weapon I have. And once I'm in the camp I can't find the helicopter anywhere. Everyone who writes in about Rambo says it's great. I just don't understand it. Rambo: star rating 0■

Martin Culpeck
Suffolk
Game Choice:
Judge Dredd

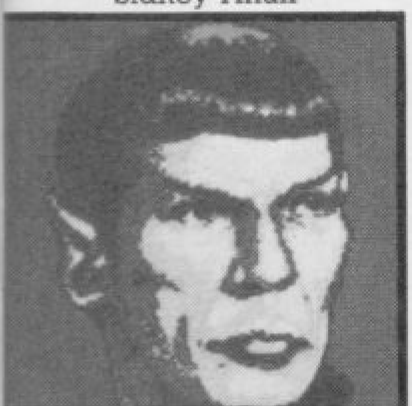




Fist II
Melbourne House

Your review said Fist II was an improvement on the first game. How wrong could you be? Those who enjoyed the original will be severely disappointed. The graphics for your bloke are all right but the back drops are naff. Whoever saw a square tree! There is no sound except when you go into combat, and that rarely happens. You also said there was a lot of running around. That's all you seem to do in this game. In the original Fist at least something was happening all the time. Altogether it's all fairly boring■

David Broadbent
Herne Bay, Kent
Game Choice:
Nemesis



Donkey Kong
Ocean

What one reviewer, Jim Douglas, does, disgraces all of you at SU. First he gave Breakthru four stars (the game is crap!), then he gave Donkey Kong three stars! Donkey Kong has bad sound, graphics, playability and is not worth £7.95. The game is worth only one star. Get rid of Jim Douglas■

Jonathan Phillips
Tyne and Wear
Game Choice:
The Great Escape

Fued
Mastertronic

I totally agree with you because it is fantastic value at £1.99. It gets hair-raising at times when you have got a great spell together and you're on your way to your cauldron to mix it and Leonoric appears from nowhere and blasts at you, making you lose a lot of energy. You certainly feel the tension and although there's no music the sound is good. The game also has superb graphics. So go on, join in the Feud!■

Phil Stubbs
Cheltenham
Game Choice:
Enduro Racer





Feud
Mastertronic

I thought your review of Fued was total trollop. 'Highly entertaining', Andy Moss said. 'Highly boring' is more like it, having to tramp backwards and forwards trying to collect spells. It gets worse when you try to escape from the other wizard. Collecting spells can be a pain as well because you can get totally lost in the maze. There isn't much colour mixing, but when you do get it, it's horrific! I have got to admit the graphics are very good and the movement is fairly good but that's about it. It's the kind of game I played once or twice and then leave on a shelf to collect dust■

Darren Routh
South Humberside
Game Choice:
Shadow Skimmer

Every so often — well very often actually — you write to tell us that we know nothing about anything and insist that some program we trashed is actually the best game ever. Conversely you blast us for saying something is great that you absolutely loath and detest.

Enough is enough. We can't take any more, if you think you're so clever you write the damn magazine. We mean it!

Every month we'll devote a page to a selection of your opinions on the latest software. Don't get mad – write the review you think the game should have received and we (subject only to space) will print it.

Now, aside from seeing your work in print we will send you a crisp £10—er, cheque — with which to buy the software title of your choice — tell us what you plan to spend the money on if your review is printed.

One request, we want to know what you look like so send us a picture. Any old picture will do — you at home, in Ibiza, in the garden, even making silly faces in photobooths we don't care.

So get cracking — write your reviews and send them together with the completed coupon below.

YOUR REVIEWS
Maximum 150 words. No swearing, libel or illegibility and come out of the corner fighting. Don't beat around the bush – tell us straight what you think. Send your review (of any *recent* game) plus your picture and fill in the coupon. *send the lot to The Write Stuff, Sinclair User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Name...

Address...

....

The program I would most like to buy with my tenner is ....

*** Reviews supplied without full name and address will not be considered for publication.**

JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT



All things being equal (Ooer! Alan Whicker mode) and

Nether Earth

being quite an interesting release from Argus. Charles Howard has Decided to complete the game and send in the complete and utterly definitive solution of which part will be printed this month and the rest next time around. I'm into that sort of thing. Charles has also included a map for your enlightenment.

Stage One
Build a few lightly armed, fast moving robots to capture the nearby factories. You will need no more than two or three such robots, equipped with cannon and tracked or, preferably, anti-gravity chassis units. Send one of these ahead and leave the others to capture the nearby neutral factories. Taking manual control of the advanced robot, use it to capture the neutral and enemy factories, as well as terminating enemy robots. Once well equipped enemy robots begin to appear, take up one of the defensive positions marked A on the map. From this position try and hold off the Insignians for as long as possible.

Stage Two
When this robot is finally destroyed, retreat to Kerberus and with your accumulated resources build battle robots. The best such robots consist of an anti-gravity propulsion unit allied with missiles, phasers and an electronic support module. Never economise on the chassis, since the speed with which a robot can turn to face an adversary is just as important as the strength of it's weapon system.

Order your robots to search and destroy enemy robots. Use these robots to fight your way through to position B (see map again.) (Use manual control to capture enemy factories along the way) The easiest way to do this is to advance and ambush the enemy robots, moving forward when a convenient gap appears. Occupy the entrance to Tarras Warbase (all toss-blanketry) and hold it for 12 hours. During this crucial time manually direct your robot.

Stage Three
When the heli-pad appears, land on it and construct more battle robots. Order about 33% (or even a third) to capture enemy factories and the rest to destroy robots. Now retreat and manually guide out any robots stuck in the maze-like approach to Tarras. Again build as many robots as your resources allow and order these to destroy enemy robots.

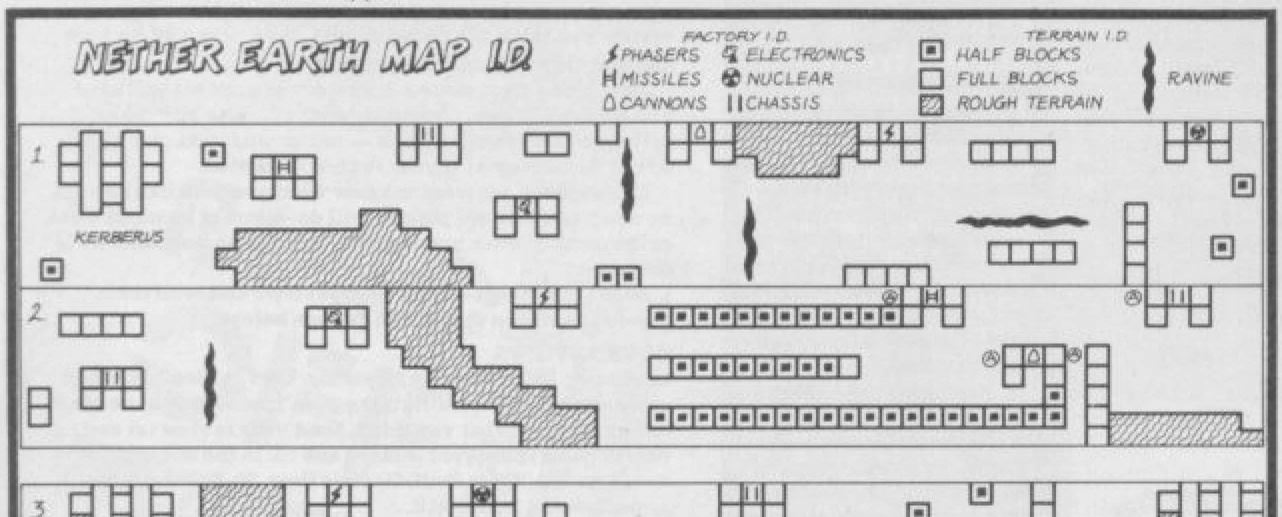
Once this section has been cleared take control of one of the foremost robots and guide it to point C. Advance slowly, firing constantly, and clear the area of enemy robots. Then occupy and hold the entrance to Faretra Warbase until the heli pad appears. Build more robots with the same orders as before. Now direct any stuck robots through to Faretra.

By now, the Insignians should control only a handful of robots. Build robots as before, but with the addition of Nuclear Bombs (Boo Hiss! Ooer! Bit of politics, bit of politics) (Aaargh! no more Ben Elton please! – Ed) Order the robots to seek and destroy the enemy robots. Advance and take control of the battle robot. Use this to eliminate the remaining Insignian robots. Now you have two choices: You can either use this robot to capture the final Insignian Warbase or you can use a nuclear equipped droid to incinerate it.

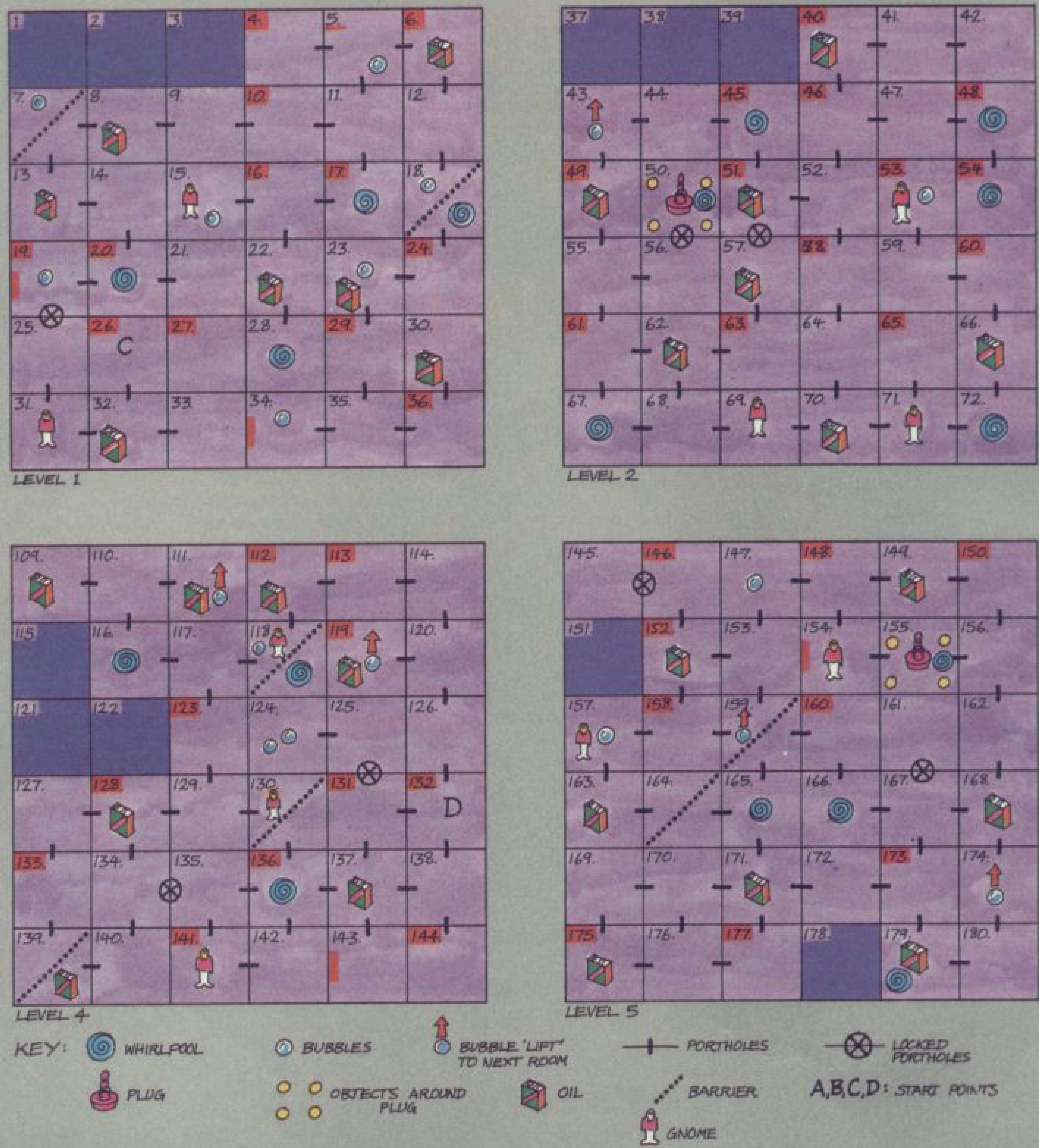
It's a funny sort of world isn't it? I mean, for the last few months there seems to have been a total lack in decent software, and then, a load of swanky and rather nifty bagfuls appear – each claiming wonderful and totally new concepts in programming and general wonderfulness all round. So, what is it all about eh? Do you raid a bank and splash out on all the games or do you decide, being a miserable old cynic, to wait until the games have been reviewed and reviewed and then not buy them anyway?

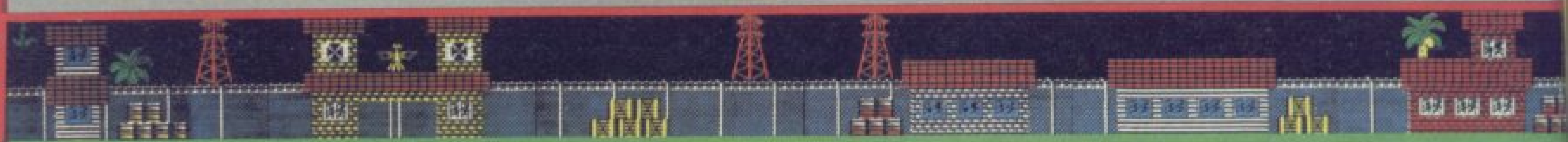
Here's the ideal answer – say to yourself "My, I'd really like to get a decent Gauntlet **clone" and then trot off to buy** Into the Eagles Nest. **Next time around say to yourself "I'd like a fast gung-ho game with smart graphics and challenging gameplay which is set to join the rest of the company's classics" and order** Gunrunner **immediately. Finally, you've managed to find another tenner and say "My, I'd love a bat 'n' ball type game that is slightly better than another game which looks just the same although is diffierent" and rush off to get you grubby hands around** Krakout.

On the other hand, you might, just say "Well, I'd really like a pair of Porsche sunglasses unless, of course, Amstrad get their act together and produce a stand alone disc drive" (Oooer! Getting a bit controversial there!)




"WHY ME? HOW MANY CAPTIVE SOULS MUST I SAVE?.... WHERE ARE THEY?.... WHERE AM I?.... WHAT IS THIS PLACE?.... WHAT IS..... THE FINAL MATRIX...?"
..... Within a galaxy of uncertainty, a universe of confusion, a reluctant hero, Nimrod, sets out on a mission that will determine the fate of his brethren Biopton's. Captured and banished to imprisonment within the vast and hostile Craton Matrix prison network, members of this peace loving race are doomed to an eternity of solitary confinement. Only Nimrod can find their hidden locations. Only Nimrod can release them to freedom again ...... Only Nimrod can discover the secret of the FINAL MATRIX.
THE BIOPTONS ARE LOOKING TO YOU AS THEIR NIMROD
GREMLIN
AMSTRAD £9.99 CASSETTE £14.99 DISK SPECTRUM 48/128K £7.99
GREMLIN GRAPHICS SOFTWARE LIMITED. ALPHA HOUSE, 10 CARVER STREET, SHEFFIELD S1 4FS.





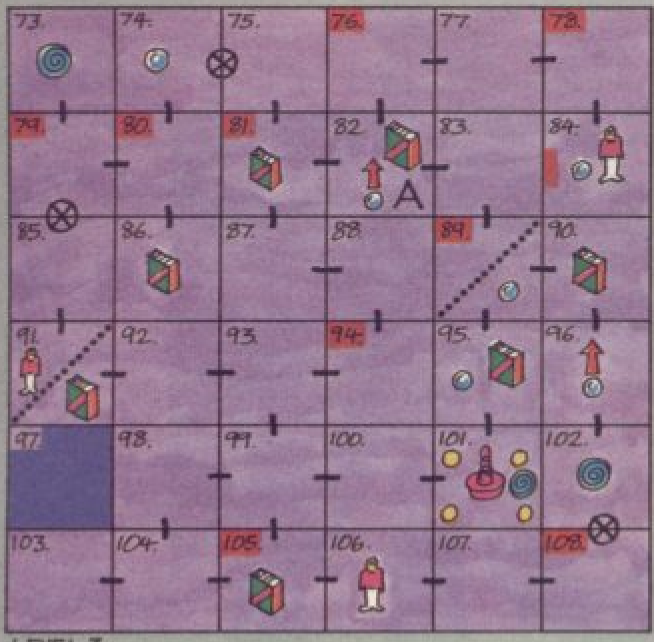
Army Moves

Not much comment required on this map of Army Moves. The long thin thing broken into four is Level Six where you try to run through the HQ – just thought you'd like to see where you're going.

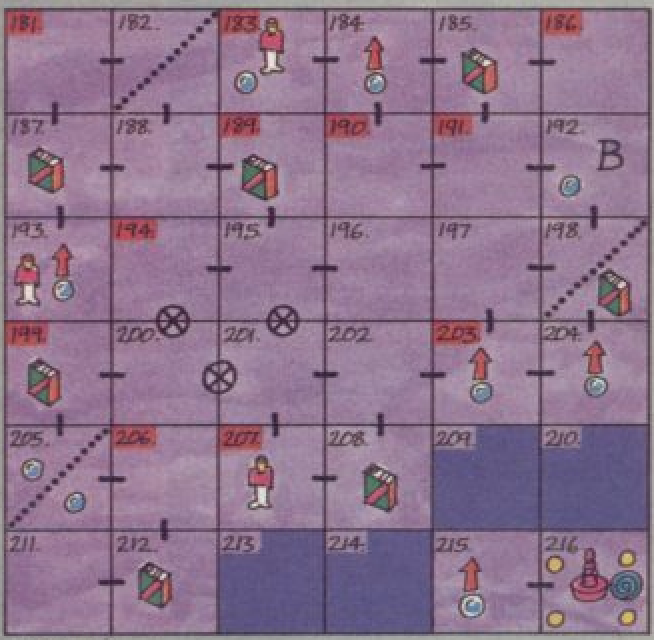
The other thing is the mysterious Level 7 wherein the safe with its secret is contained – bet you didn't even know it existed.

The map shows you where the key doors are and how you can get into the final room to blow up the safe.





LEVEL 3



LEVEL 6

Hydrofool

This month SU brings you the definitive solution to **Hydrofool**, by far the most watery game to grace these pages. Behold the map of all its rooms with what's where and why.

The idea is to release the four plugs by collecting the four appropriate objects for each.

Here's the complete list of the objects you need and where you'll find them:

All the collectable objects:
Pearls Rooms 65,42,181,197
Shells Rooms 145,124,162,190
Chests Rooms 7,34,161,211
Keys Rooms 36,19,143,174,205
Boots Rooms 74,102
Bucket Rooms 139
Tin Rooms 114

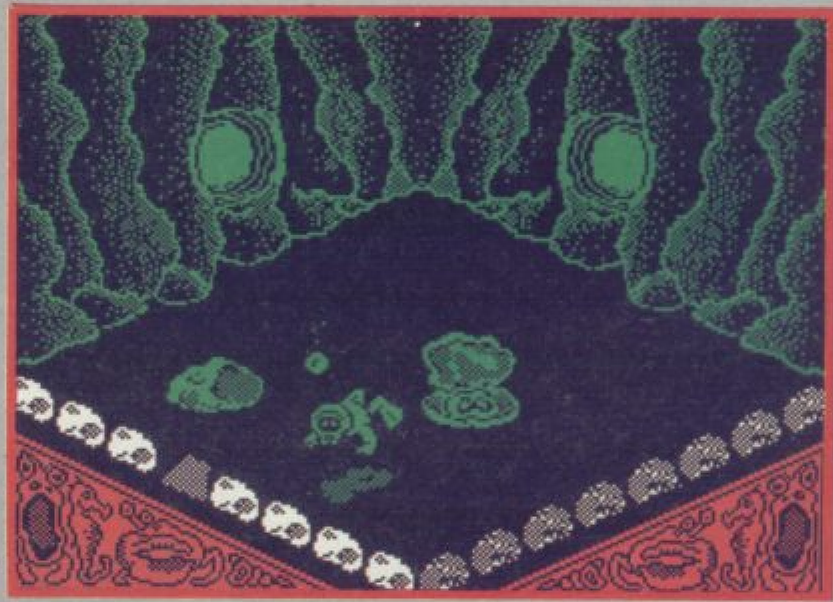
The objects necessary for the four plugs
Plug 1 (Room 50) 2 Trinkets and 2 Pearls
Plug 2 (Room 101) 2 Boots
Plug 3 (Room 155) 4 Shells
Plug 4 (Room 216) 2 Trinkets 2 Pearls

The trinkets are all found in the chests which are opened by firing a key at them:
Chests: 7,34,161,211
Keys: 36,19,143,174,205

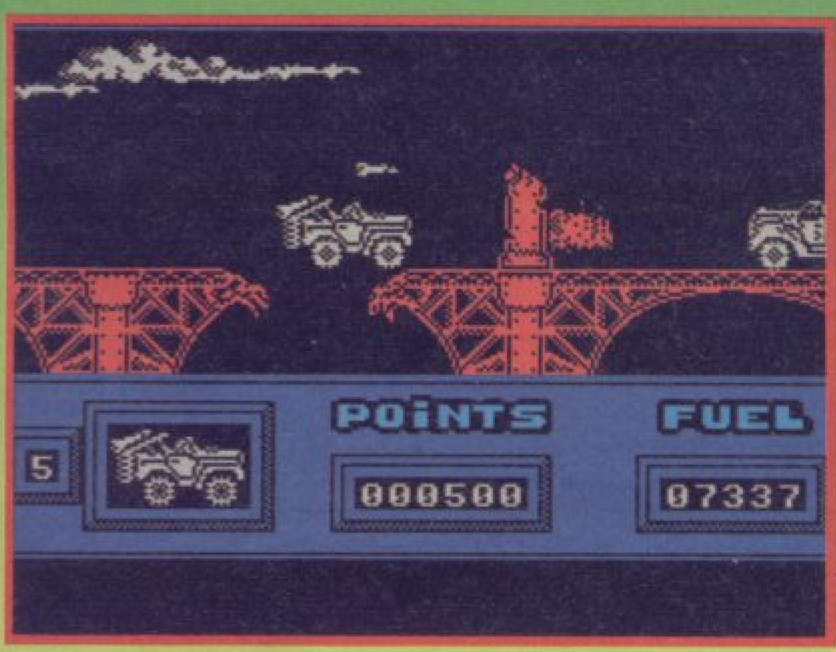
There are 42 oil cans and 16 gnomes (one in a chest) Finally some assorted clues (thanks to Gargoyle): Harpoons kill Whales, Tridents kill Fish, Horseshoes kill Sea Horses, Spoons demolish Jelly Fish, the Pirahna can be lured away by a bone and slugs and Anemones just have to be avoided.

Finally a Poem:

Beware the fish, the hump back whale,
The sea-horse and the molluscs
But worse of all, beware the slug –
It bites you on the spur of the moment!











This superb arcade game is based on the popular multiple-choice adventure series by Mark Smith and Jamie Thomson, published by Sphere Books. Set in 3033 AD you are a special agent, codename **FALCON,** and your mission is to halt the tracks of a renegade Time Lord who is threatening to disrupt future history by his ruthless meddling in the past. Your time machine "**Falcon's Wing**" takes you in your quest to ensure the timelines of the future remain uncorrupted!

Please send me **FALCON:** The Renegade Lord

Commodore 64/128 ☐ Spectrum 48/128 ☐

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to **Virgin Games** and crossed

Total £____________________

(Please do *not* post coins or notes.)

Name____________________

Address____________________

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Virgin Games, 2/4 Vernon Yard, Portobello Road, London W11 2DX

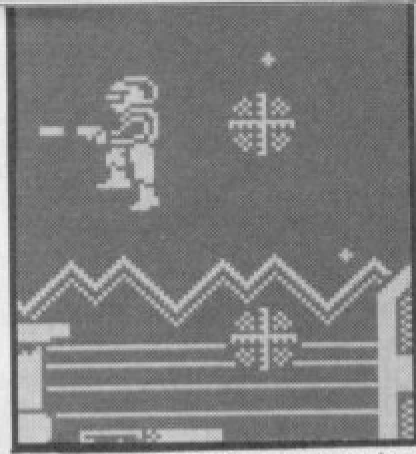
JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT

Gunrunner

which is quite possibly the most fabulous gung-ho game released so far this year. I haven't had a long bash at the game and so cannot bring the totally definitive cheats (excuses, excuses! Ed) but here are some general tips. Watch out for the goods next time.

a) Keep running! I usually totally forget about collecting for a high score and instead run like crazy to the other end. You actually need not collect anything whatsoever, which means that it is a dodge and blast game. The first level is really easy. The first object you collect should be the multi thingy which allows your shots to multiply. This is probably the most useful. Next off, grab the poison and then forget about firing at the aliens. Keep running and use the poison when any marauding aliens approach – remember, though, some of the aliens fly along the top and can be avoided easily. So, you will have to pause for a few seconds to suss out the alien wave before slamming the poison key.

The Jetpac is generally a pain in the lower orifice. It is okay for a laugh, but prevents the man from ducking to avoid aliens. You need to monitor the Jetpac's situation constantly otherwise you will find



yourself dropping in on a few friends just when you would rather be home sipping a cup of tea and eating a sticky bun. Finally, there's the shield which has very obvious uses. Best collect it and then keep running to get as far through the level as you can before the shield runs out.

b) One you have managed to get through the level, you will be placed in a bonus screen which is generally good larf. No worry about loss of life here chaps. One point, you'll automatically be equipped with the Jetpac which in itself can be a pain. When certain sorts of aliens come you way, you will need to either get as low down as you can or fly to the top. No ducking here. Another tip is to keep on the move. Keep moving right and shooting the orbs as you go – you'll come to a point where you can't go any further which is generally interesting.

Usually there are some sort of baddie on your tale and when you come to try to turn around, they tend to collide into you – a bad thing. It is often better to fly around avoiding everything totally to get the survival bonus. Then you're onto the next level.

Waffle, waffle, ratatatat, 'Arrrgh!', waffle, waffle, ratatat, crunch, waffle, 'At last, the exit!'. 'Well done son, you have blown the castle apart and all you need do now is to rescue another twelve prisoners before lunch. In the meantime, have a medal.'

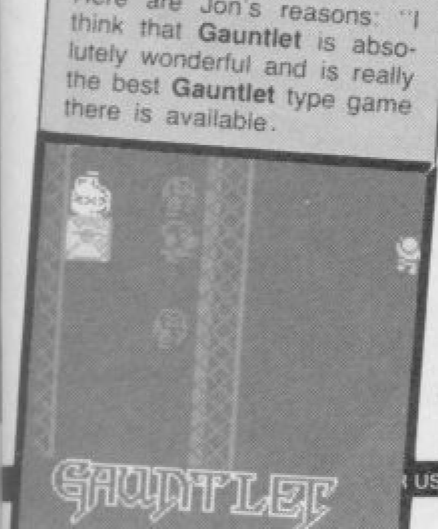
Thanks for the **Short Circuit** solution are due to Ian O'Connor and Karl Fudge. Okay, what shall we do now? How about listening to Engleburt Humperdink's latest LP? No? Well, I don't exactly blame you, instead, lets take a peek at the Reader's Chart for this month which is rather old hat, but shows what people are still buying with their tenners. Remember to include your favourite pop group or your entry will be totally ignored.

BIG FIVE READER'S CHART

by JON COOK (Good name)

1. Gauntlet
2. The Great Escape
3. Judge Dredd (!!!)
4. Batman
5. Arkanoid

Here are Jon's reasons: "I think that **Gauntlet** is absolutely wonderful and is really the best **Gauntlet** type game there is available."



Into the Eagle's Nest

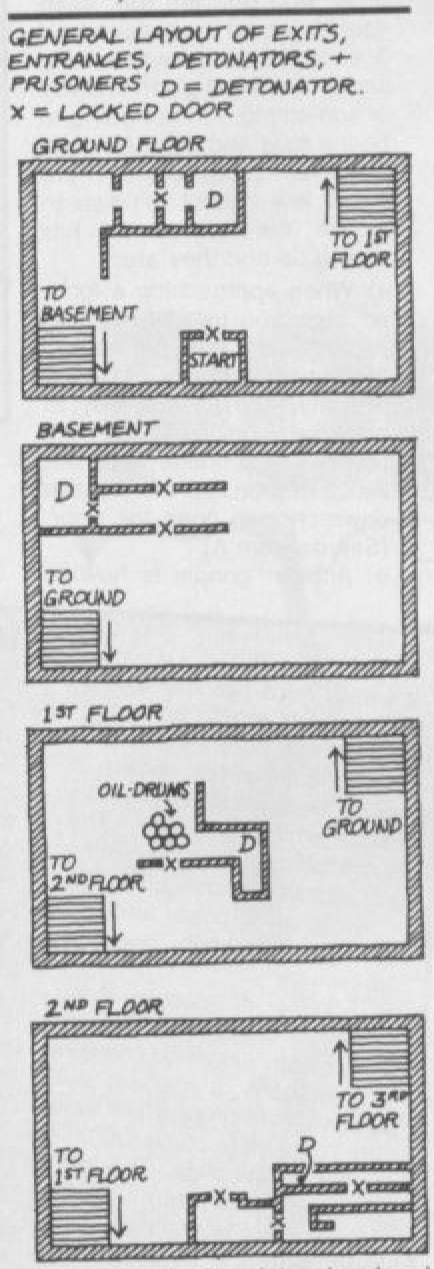
is *possibly* the most fabulous **Gauntlet** clone that has ever been released. – I'm not going to say that it is the most fabulous because there are bound to be about a trillion more out before the next milenium or before Amstrad build a stand alone disc drive. (Ooeer!).

Anyhow, after waffling around the WW2 castle for about three hours, I managed to blow the castle apart, thus completing level one of the game and also rescue the prisoner on level two. The game itself if incredibly large – Well, ever so slightly – In fact, a lot bigger than a lot of smaller things around which I think is quite amazing. All things being equal, the game pans **Dandy** and **Druid** into a mushy puddle on the floor and has brilliant graphics.

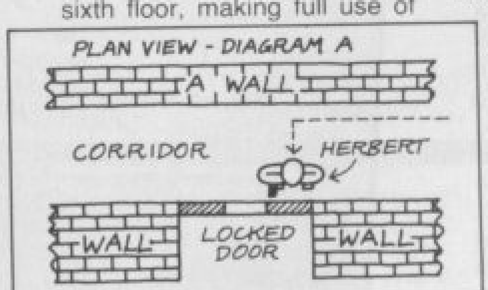
Below are some tips on how to complete missions one and two and some minor hints on the final two parts, all with some nifty diagrams.

Misson One

This is the one where you twoddle all over each floor searching desperately for the detonator device to ultimately blow up the castle – preferably once you are safe outside. For

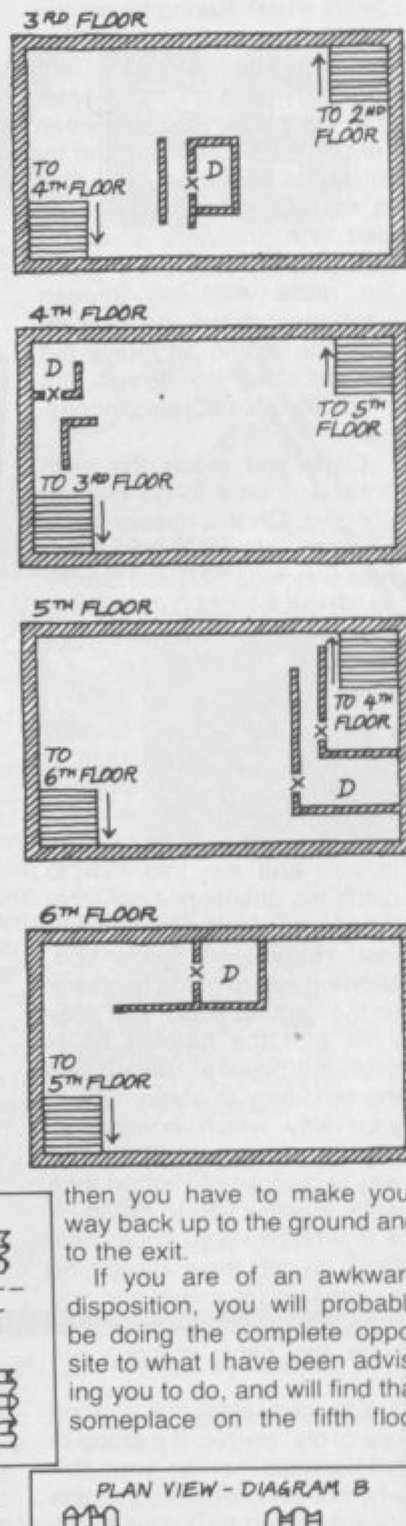


a start, don't go into a level and shoot at the first detonator you come across – You have to time everything carefully to make sure you are not incinerated. So, firstly, trot off to the sixth floor, making full use of



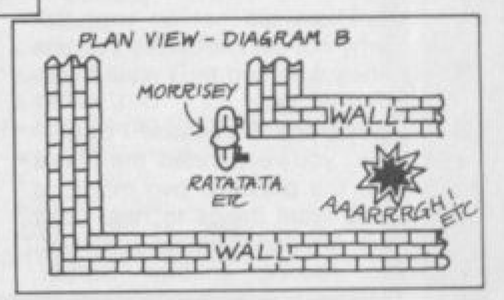
the ammo and collecting all the keys as you go. This is generally okay as the keys and ammunition dumps re-appear every time you enter a floor, but the medical kits don't. Once you have managed to get your bodyness in the general proximity of the sixth floor, the fun starts.

Search out the whereabouts of the detonator and start it off – it's now a mad rush to go from floor to floor in the downwards direction letting off the detonators as you go. Don't stop once you get to the ground floor – you need to trudge through the basement which is probably the heaviest defended floor. If you have survived the ordeal so far,



then you have to make your way back up to the ground and to the exit.

If you are of an awkward disposition, you will probably be doing the complete opposite to what I have been advising you to do, and will find that someplace on the fifth floor



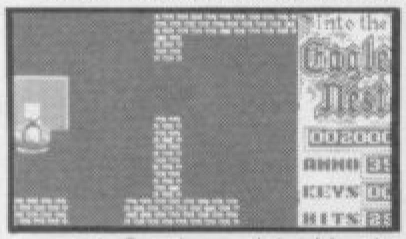
JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT

your little man will suddenly croak. It is impossible to head upwards through the castle, letting off the dynamite as you go because on your way back down the whole castle will blow up with Henry or Vera or whatever you choose to call him (or her) still in it.

Mission Two.

Okay, so you think you are pretty smart, having blown the castle apart without getting singed, and so your are foolhardy enough to re-enter the castle (which has been rebuilt in ten seconds) and try to rescue a prisoner. Now, this is actually quite easy as Herbert (the prisoner) is always hidden away on the sixth floor. So, make your way through each successive floor grabbing the ammo and keys but remembering to leave the medi kits unless really necessary.

Once you reach the sixth floor, it is time to go Herbert spotting. On this mission he is generally always in the same hole watching *Surprise Surprise* on the telly. Make your way



to him and run into him to catch his attention. Now, provided you don't rush off too fast, Herbert will follow you, allowing you to guide him back to the ground floor. You may think that the hardest bit is over, but beware! Herbert has the tendancy to stand right in your way which is ever so slightly annoying. The best way to dispose of Herbert for a while to allow you to polish off a few Nazis, is to shoot him! Once he gets the message, he disappears for a sulk and you can catch up with him later once the panic stations are over.

You can also make good use of ole' Herbie. If a group of soldiers are hot on your tail, why not get Herbert to stand in their way and thus shield you. Rather nifty!

Missions Three and Four.

So, you've panned the Nazis on the previous two missions and want things to heat up a bit. Mission three instructs you to rescue another Herbet. However, old Herbiebaby is not on the sixth floor – in fact he could be just about anywhere and this is generally a harder task to complete Mission four has you detonating the castle again although there are less medical kits and ammo around. Why no more tips? I can't get any further!

General Hints. (who is he?) On the previous page are a few diagrams which try to tell you where abouts the exits and entrances detanators, and other goodies are on each floor. It would take ages and ages to plot out the whole thing and unless I get given a BMW or something, I'm not going to be the mug and do it. No fear! But! Wait! Hang loose! There are a few helpful thingies to reduce the amount of hits adding up and they are:

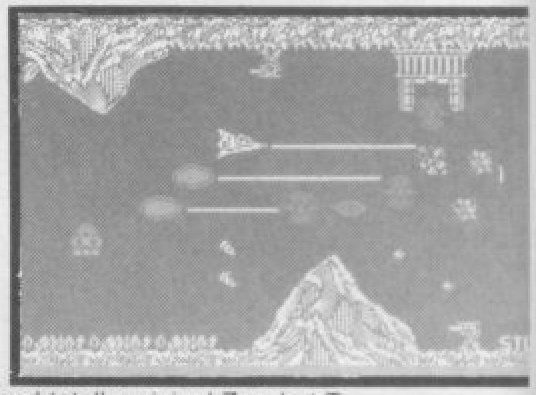
a) When approaching a locked door, you usually need to run into it and then run back – this almost certainly causes a few hits. The easiest way to open the doors if they are right up front, is to nudge up to the wall and then tap the joystick down once to open the door. (See diagram A)

b) Another goodie is how to shoot around the corners – I'm sure you all can see that your man has his gun on the right hand side, so when you come to a corner, move your man so that the gun is just jutting out. This will allow you to shoot around the corner and the Nazis can't hit you back. (See diagram b)

Oi! Wotcha 'Chelle. (Lofty mode.) Did ya hear what Den's been up to? Well e's splashed out an' bought loads of **Nemesis** tape thingies. Yeah. Well I don't know what they are either. but 'e says they're the in thing. Yeah. No, I don't think it's a method of birth control. Na. Yeah, wotcha Dot. 'Ave a look at this chart thing for **Nemesis.** It sort of tells ya your height and the corresponding weight you should be, yeah I think that's it and the bloke at the top is the fittest or something like that. Yeah.

Zapchat Big Eight: Nemesis

Position	Name	Score
1	D.Crawford	101,120
2	M.Barton	98,130
3	N.Parker	76,980
4	C.Davies	75,890
5	S.Leeds	69,430
6	M.Costas	65,760
7	M.Taylor	44,800
8	R.Miles	34,906



Roll up! Roll up! The ever elusive and totally original Zapchat T-Shirt is winging it's way via first class pidgeon to Dave of the Crawford. Some people always seem to get pitiful scores such as Mark Taylor who blames everything on the keyboard. Nex month, the totally great (i.e. not crap) **Gunrunner** will be under the microscope, get the scores in soon.

THE INFORMATION EXCHANGE

It wasn't here last month, but it's here this month and probably will be here next month unlike last month when it wasn't here at all unlike this month when it's here. The exchange seems to be getting a bit popular which was actually quite a surprise and so, without further ado, here we go.

a) Trillions of people have written in concerning **Enduro Racer** from Activision. Now, it seems there is a cheat that allows you to press a few keys and zoom off to stage four in a matter of seconds. The puzzling thing was that all cheats quoted were completely diffe-rent! What's it all about eh? Anyhow, I shall quote some and the names of people who sent the goods in. What you need to do is to press the Caps Lock, A,Z,W and Edit keys on the Plus. On the Plus 2 and 128, press Q and Delete. Or, being completely different, press Q, W, A and Z. People who scribbled a note include:- Gerald Geddes, Crispin Verrinder, Jon Cripps, David Lewis, Alan Edwards, Mark Stanley, James Watson, Garry Dark, Paul Wright and The Jellybean (Mark Fisher).

b) M.Mikely from Carford wrote in to complain about the *Idiot's Guide to Poking* that appeared in the mag a few months back. He rabbits on and on not fully realising that I did not in fact have anything whatsoever to do with the article in question! It wasn't me! I am innocent! In fact, I approached the esteemed Editor (may his name only be mentioned in hushed tones etc) with the idea of doing something like that yonks ago. Send you complaints to the Hardware page!

c) Good grief! This next one is total tossblanketry, but here goes. Ryan McIntrye from Yorkshire wrote in to tell me a secret concerning **Zub.** It seems you can press 2, 4, 6, and 8 and a little word 'cheat' appears on the screen. But that's not all, oh no! If you have a plus two, press 1,3,5,7 when you are in the cheat mode and a completely different game appears and it's called **Lightforce.** Arf arf! You don't expect me to believe that one! Pull the other plonker!

d) Finally, a few pleas for tips on really old games that appeared yonks ago. N. Dale would like some tips on **Chuckie Egg** and **Chuckie Egg 2.** Malcolm Young would like help with (deep breath) **The Boggit, Kobyashi Naru, Kentillam Seabase Delta, Quest for the Holy Grail** and **Robin of Sherlock.** Have you noticed anything in particular? Yes! They're all adventure games! Anyhow, if anybody wants to help and sends in the goods, I shall pass them on.

There I was, innocently sat having a bash at the totally wonderful (ie not crap) **Head over Heals** from Ocean, when this Editor thingy springs from his desk to load in Imagine's Ocean Dinamic's Any one's **Army Moves.** Well, call me Captain Shavy's Slapneck if it isn't incredible naff. It is supposed to be a sort of follow up to **Green Beret,** but fails miserably. The graphics are incredibly uninspiring and don't even rank close to those on **Amaurote** which, only costs £2.99. The gameplay is monotonous and would probably put people off the game altogether. "I think it's really good" said David "Yes!" hailed the rest of the staff. "But you really need two people to control the thing properly." Imagine's answer to multi-player participation perhaps? Oh dear.

Onto more cheerful things and the **Xeno** competition which is still open for anybody to enter. If you fancy a day trip to London to challenge your-s truly at a few rounds of the gameplay, then hurry up and write in. The day will probably be sometime in July, so if you're still at school, it'll be fed during the hol's. You'll be fed and watered and the winner might just get a prize, although we haven't thought of what yet. Never mind, it's bound to be totally wonderful and unique. So, get those entries in soon!

To finish off this months. . . (insert your own adjective) column, let's take a quick look at Hewson's

Next month I'll try to get ya the maps of all ten levels which should be a bit of fun. In the meantime, get cranking that joystick on the game and then send your high scores in for the *Zapchat Challenge.* Don't forget the totally wonderful **Xeno** compo. Now, until next month, I'm off to an elementary course on attenuation curves throughout the ionisphere which affect radio navigation in the Dover Straits on certain days of the year. . . Namely next Tuesday.

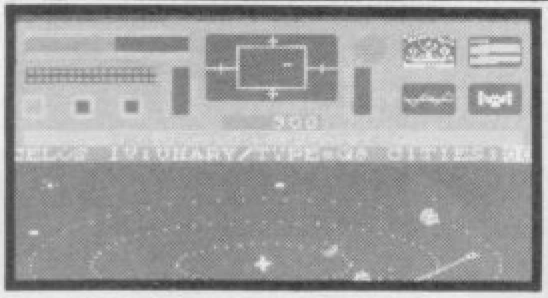
5 POKES

ALL POKES BY ADRIAN SINGH

NEMESIS THE WARLOCK

Type in the listing and RUN it before playing in the game tape from the beginning. You'll now have infinite lives.

```
  1 CLEAR 64500
  2 LET t=0: LET w=1
  5 FOR f=32000 TO 32140
 10 READ a: POKE f,a
 15 LET t=t+a*w: LET w=w+1
 20 NEXT f
 25 IF t<>1165845 THEN  PRINT "
DATA ERROR": STOP
 30 PRINT AT 10,0;"START 'NEMES
IS THE WARLOCK' TAPE"
 50 RANDOMIZE USR 32000
100 DATA 221,33,203,92,17,234
110 DATA 6,62,255,55,205,86,5
120 DATA 48,241,243,237,94,33
130 DATA 44,125,229,33,187,98
140 DATA 229,51,51,17,243,187
150 DATA 1,36,3,33,253,94,62
160 DATA 202,237,79,195,187,98
170 DATA 33,70,125,229,33,23
180 DATA 188,229,51,51,17,33
190 DATA 188,1,246,2,33,33,188
200 DATA 62,208,237,79,195,23
210 DATA 188,33,33,188,17,209
220 DATA 138,1,92,0,237,176,33
230 DATA 228,138,34,233,138,34
240 DATA 237,138,33,218,138,34
250 DATA 245,138,33,255,138,34
260 DATA 9,139,62,195,50,29,139
270 DATA 33,116,125,34,30,139
280 DATA 195,209,138,33,134,125
290 DATA 17,179,190,1,7,0,237
300 DATA 176,175,50,195,190
310 DATA 195,135,190,175,50,131
320 DATA 120,50,138,120
```



STAR RAIDERS II

Type in the listing and RUN it before playing in the game tape from the beginning. Your ship is now undestructible.

```
  1 REM STAR RAIDER II poke
  2 REM A.SINGH 87
  3 REM
  5 BORDER 0: INK 7: PAPER 0
 10 CLEAR 29999
 15 PRINT AT 2,2;"START 'STAR R
AIDERS II' TAPE"
 20 LOAD ""CODE
 25 LET w=0: LET t=0
 30 FOR f=65070 TO 65082
 40 READ a: POKE f,a
 45 LET t=t+w*a: LET w=w+1
 50 NEXT f
 55 IF t<>9999 THEN  PRINT "ERR
OR IN DATA": STOP
 70 DATA 62,24,50,174,147
 80 DATA 62,250,50,175
 90 DATA 147,195,48,117
 95 PRINT AT 17,0;
100 RANDOMIZE USR 65024
```

THRUST II

Type in the listing and RUN it before playing in the game tape from the beginning. You'll now have infinite lives.

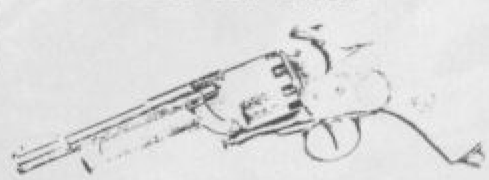
```
  1 REM THRUST II poke
  2 REM A.SINGH 87
  3 REM
  4 FOR f=40192 TO 40448
  5 POKE f,158: NEXT f
 10 LET w=0: LET t=0
 15 FOR f=40599 TO 40637
 20 READ a: POKE f,a
 25 LET t=t+w*a: LET w=w+1
 30 NEXT f
 35 IF t<>115508 THEN  PRINT "E
RROR IN DATA": STOP
 40 DATA 62,157,237,71,237
 50 DATA 94,201,229,213,197
 60 DATA 245,175,50,18,93
 70 DATA 58,152,127,254
 80 DATA 61,32,11,175,50
 90 DATA 152,127,62,63,237
100 DATA 71,237,86,243,241
110 DATA 193,209,225,255,201
200 PRINT "PRESS ANY KEY TO NEW
COMPUTER"
210 PRINT "THEN TYPE LOAD """"
TO LOAD GAME"
220 IF INKEY$<>"" THEN  GO TO 2
20
230 IF INKEY$="" THEN  GO TO 23
0
235 RANDOMIZE USR 40599
240 RANDOMIZE USR 4660
```



GUNRUNNER

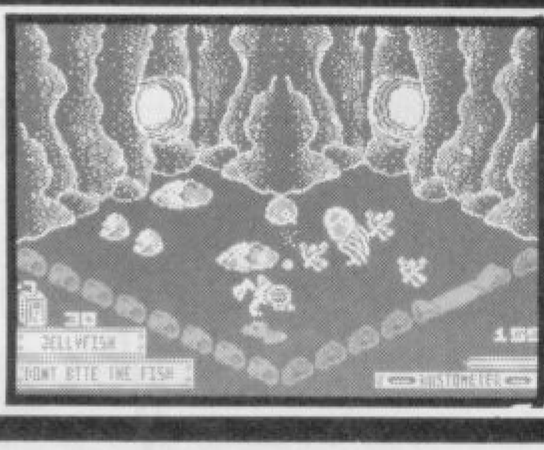
Type in the listing and RUN it before playing in the game tape from the beginning. You'll now have infinite lives.

```
 10 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 7
 20 CLEAR 25317
 25 PRINT AT 10,5;"START 'GUNRU
NNER' TAPE"
 30 LOAD ""CODE
 35 POKE 64531,68
 40 RANDOMIZE USR 64512
 45 POKE 65120,12
 50 FOR f=23308 TO 23323
 55 READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
 60 DATA 175,50,19,192,50,132
 70 DATA 190,50,169,192,50
 80 DATA 69,205,195,198,187
 90 RANDOMIZE USR 65082
```



HYDROFOOL

Type in the listing and RUN it before playing in the game tape from the beginning. You will now be invincible!



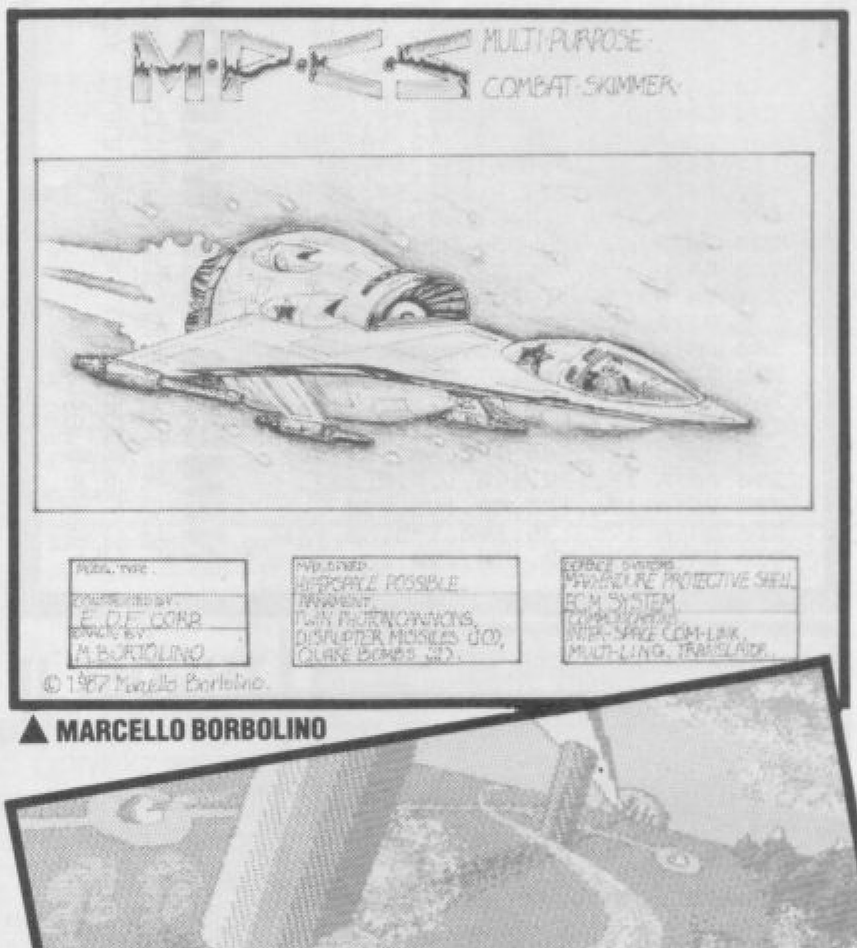

```
  1 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 7
  2 CLEAR 24799
  5 PRINT AT 10,5;"START 'HYDRO
FOOL' TAPE"
 10 LOAD ""CODE
 20 POKE 64068,195
 25 POKE 64069,248
 30 POKE 64070,255
 40 FOR f=65528 TO 65535
 45 READ a: POKE f,a
 50 NEXT f
 60 DATA 62,201,50,3
 65 DATA 101,195,71,250
 70 RANDOMIZE USR 63500
```

SHADOW SKIMMER

COMPETITION WINNERS

Ever since we announced the amazing Design Your Own Shadow Skimmer and win a Ridiculously Generous Prize Competition (You may remember it as the You Gotta Draw the Line Comp, but there you are), we here at SU have been bombarded by marauding space craft of every shape and design. And some of them were pretty mean, especially the one that converted to a dragon when it landed. But we've now managed to fight off most of the fleet, and we're currently holding captive the thirty one leader ships. And they're all going to get prizes if they're good and they leave us alone a bit. The standard of entry was very high, and congratulations go to everyone who entered. But here are the winners, kicking off with the ultimate Shadow Skimmer:

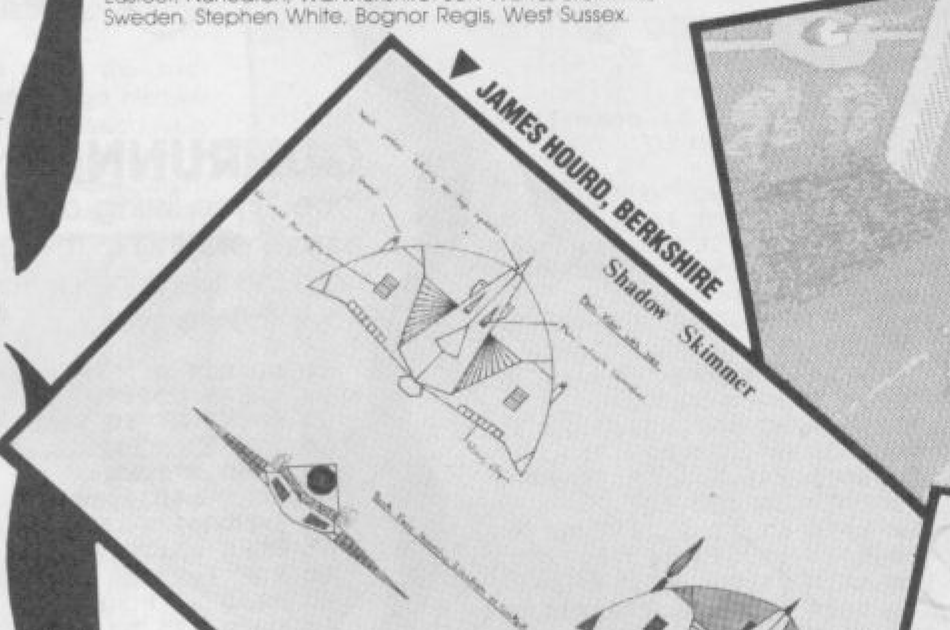
First Prize Winner – Marcello Bortolino, Stoke Newington. And the thirty Runners-up R N Russell, Butlers Marston, Warwickshire. James Hourd, Maidenhead, Berkshire. Scott Billington, Attleborough, Nuneaton. Duncan Wilson, Aldershot, Hants. Paul Gannaway, Wokingham, Berkshire. Martin Lawless, Bury, Lancashire. Christian Adaimthwaite, Alwoodley, Leeds, Yorks. Ka Hung Man, Bushey, Herts. Robin Hulman, Rondgate, Ripon, Yorks. Stephen Caton, Preston, Lancs. Scott Thomas, Kilbarchan, Reivfrewshire, Scotland. D Harrison, Broad Oak, Mr. Bishops Stortford. Stuart Gibson, Barham, Canterbury, Kent. John Currid, Bolton, Greater Manchester. Andrew Jones, Anstey, Leicester. Dylan Smith, Stratton on the Fosse, Somerset. Quentin Carpenter, Newbury, Berks. James Yusuf, Bow, London. Einer Sjurso, Sofiemyr, Norway. Glenn Darbyshire, Litherland, Liverpool. Christopher Morrow, Crossgate, Leeds. Andrew James Chappin, Amersham, Bucks. Rodney Hunt, Bridport, Dorset. H. Lam, Leeds. Alistair Margetts, Burgess Hill, Sussex. Mark Woodley, Dagenham, Essex. Stephen Carter, Accrington, Lancashire. Jeremy Easteer, Nuneaton, Warwickshire. Jon Watte, Bromma, Sweden. Stephen White, Bognor Regis, West Sussex.



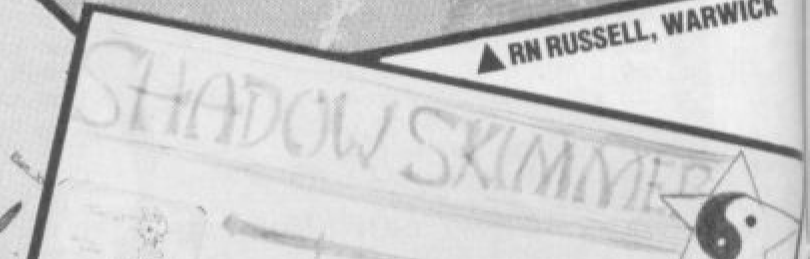
▲ MARCELLO BORBOLINO



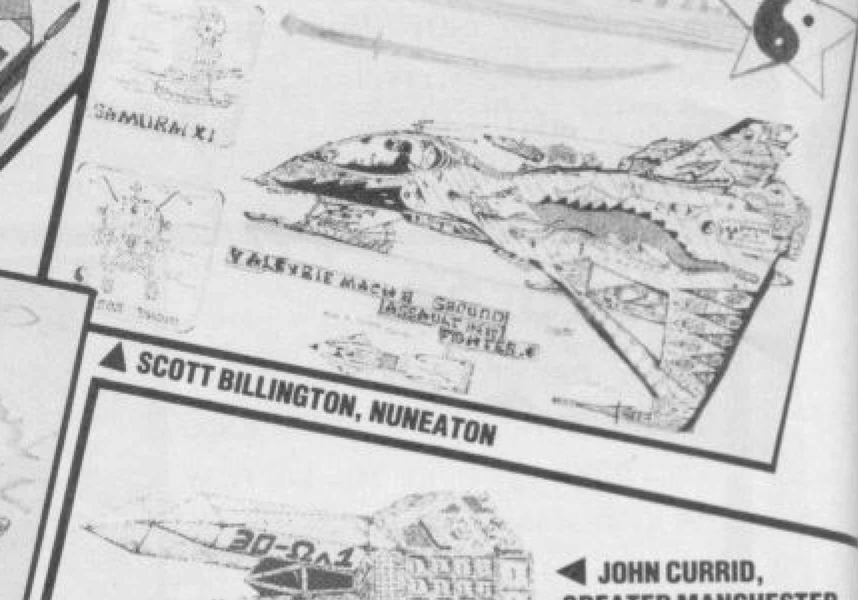
▲ RN RUSSELL, WARWICK



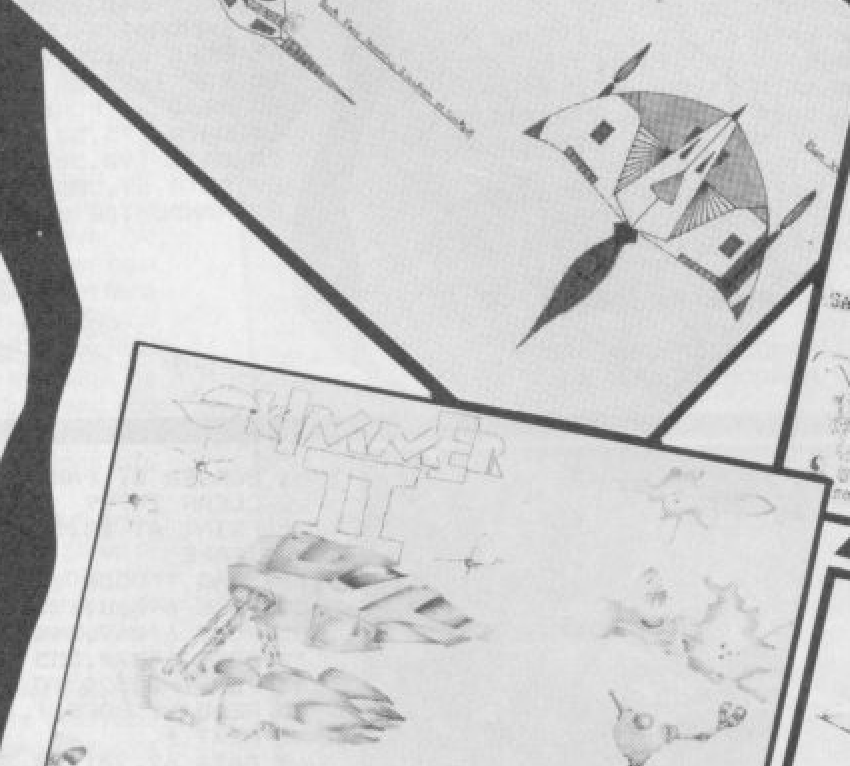
▼ JAMES HOURD, BERKSHIRE



▲ SCOTT BILLINGTON, NUNEATON



◀ JOHN CURRID, GREATER MANCHESTER



▲ DUNCAN WILSON, ALDERSHOT

UNDER RAPS!

There's nothing funny about nuclear war, so the Americans invented Strategic Defence Initiative, or Star Wars, to prevent it. And the boys at Activision are turning it into a game called **High Frontier**.

Written by Alan Steel (partly responsible for **Theatre Europe**), **High Frontier** puts the player in charge of developing and employing SDI. There's also a chance to repel a Soviet attack if you feel that sort of thing is necessary. Included with the game, we are told, is a booklet which comprehensively (no less) explains the principles behind Star Wars and the type of weapons it would be effective against. **High Frontier** will be available round about June-ish, and will undoubtedly be very topical.

Wargames. If you like them, you're going to be very pleased with Activision. Because they're in the process of programming a little beauty by the name of **Guadal Canal**. Those of you with a working knowledge of the Second World War will remember that Guadal Canal was a battle which took place between the American and Japanese forces during the latter part of 1942. The game re-enacts the battle, using air, ground and sea forces to gain eventual control of the canal. **Guadal Canal** is being programmed by Ian Bird (**Theatre Europe**), and comes complete with background information about the real battle, and the forces employed. It will be available from the end of July.

Claude Raines and Lon Chaney made money out of him. Not to mention Andrew Lloyd-Webber. Who are we talking about? **The Phantom of the Opera**, that's who. Despite the fact that he's more hideously deformed and more than a little mad, CSD think that the Phantom will make a great game. So Mark Rivers has been busy reading the book, watching the film and visiting the show. Looks like it's going to be humdinger of a game, release date is set for Christmas.

Newsdate: July

Whodu

OUTRUN GOES GOLD



With Gauntlet **still high in the charts US Gold has decided coin-op licences are the thing to go for.**

So much so, it's beaten off fierce competition from several other firms to win the licences for two of this year's hottest arcade machines — Out Run **and** 720°.

Out Run, the No 1 coin-op in SU's chart for several months now, is a Pole Position **— derived race game from Sega. The graphics are great and the Ferrari which you drive hugs the tarmac so tight dips and bumps in the road hide all kinds of unexpected obstacles to be avoided.**

In the arcades Out Run **— like Dec Le Mans — is one of the new breed of hydraulically operated games which seat you actually inside a mock-up racing car. Then as you play the game the cabinet tilts left and right as you spin the wheel.**

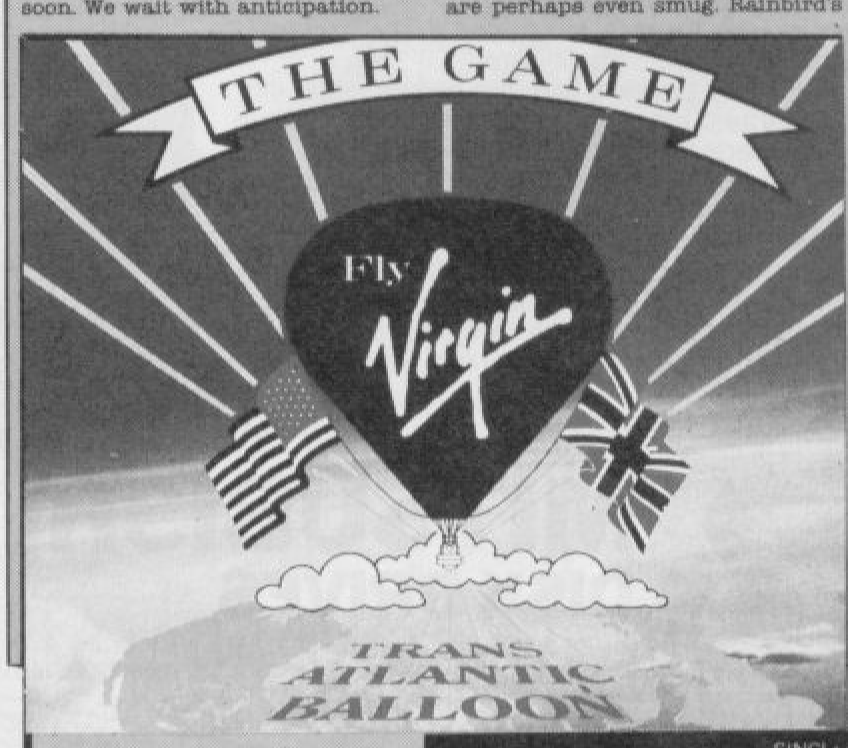
All very unsettling, but it is a bit hard to see how US Gold intends to incorporate this feature in the Spectrum version.

720° **from Atari is an even more up-to-date game, with the coin-op itself only being released earlier this year.**

Ladeees and gentlemen! In the red corner, Activision. In the blue corner, Code Masters. Second out – Round One! Activision is saying that Code Masters has nicked the idea for **Grand Prix Simulator** from the coin-op **Superprint**. Which just happens to be Activision's latest licence. Codemasters says that it's absolutely not true and that they'll fight anyone who says it is. Activision don't want to have trouble about it, but they're not going to let Codemasters get away with it. There's definitely a fight in here somewhere, but I'm not sure whether or not it will actually ever get to the ring. Activision is reckoning on a settlement soon. We wait with anticipation.

Every now and then, some smart 'Software House decides to buy the license to a popular coin-op. After all, what makes money in the arcades is more than likely to make money on a home computer. But no-one has ever done it back to front, that is, turn a micro smash hit into a coin-op. Until now. Bally/Sente, one of the top coin-op manufacturers, has bo-ught up the rights to the hugely successful **Starglider** from Rainbird Software. **Starglider** has picked up awards from America, and one or two from over here and Bally/Sente was extremely impressed by **Starglider's** arcade qualities. Rainbird, it must be said, are not too surprised, and are perhaps even smug. Rainbird's publisher, Paul Hibbard, says the game was designed with the conversion in mind. "It's only the beginning," he says. No hum. For the programmer, Jez San, it's a dream come true apparently. As a total arcade nut case, he says that it's always been his dream to have one of his own games in the arcades.





If Richard Branson wasn't real, someone would've had to invent him. Without Richard Branson there would be no modern-day super heroes. No one to look up to. And Virgin would probably not have thought up a game based on a balloon trip across the Atlantic. Those of you who are keen Branson-watchers will doubtless recall that Dickie's off across the sea in a basket attached to something full of hot air. And the new game from Virgin, due for release in mid-June, is based on a bloke who goes across the sea in a basket attached to something filled with hot air. (Sounds a bit like a rival Spectrum magazine to me). Virgin's boss, Nick Alexander, denies that the game is only coming out because Branson is the overall boss. He describes the game as having, 'considerable commercial potential.' So there you have it

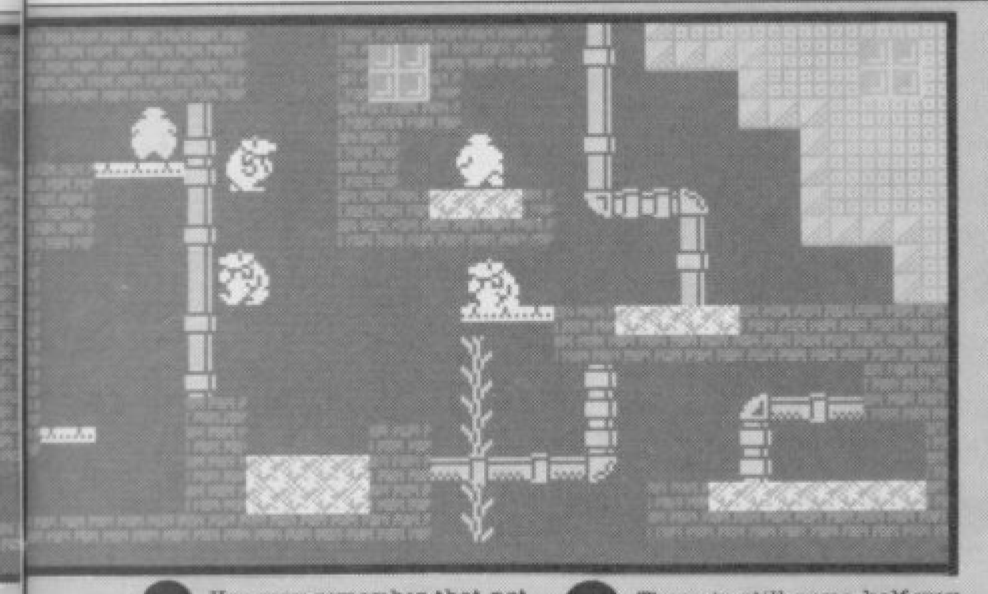
unwot... ...wsdate: July



It's a brilliant skateboarding simulation game which takes its name from what is apparently one of the most difficult skateboarding maneouvres — a double loop in mid-air.

The better you do at the game the more points you get to buy extra equipment — helmets, better boards, pads and shoes. And with all that lot you can jump higher, skate faster and generally beef up your bonus points.

So far there's no details of price or availability for the two titles but it is likely US Gold plans a launch in time for Christmas.



● You may remember that not so long ago Activision acquired the rights to Infocom's goodies over here. (Infocom is the top US adventure house — more famous even than Level 9).

Which led us at SU to wonder whether or not, perchance, Activision might see its way clear to converting Infocom goodies to the old (well, quite new really) 128K+3.

Inside sources tell us that conversions to the Plus 3 have been discussed at Activision Towers. So it's possible that in the near future, some of Infocom's brilliant goodies will be accessible to Speccy owners.

We wait eagerly to see if gems such as **The Hitch Hikers' Guide to the Galaxy** and Douglas Adams' latest Infocom adventure **Bureaucracy** will turn up.

● There is still some half-way serious stuff about for the Spectrum but it comes from Germany. Wouldn't you know it? Individual software has developed a quasi-**Gem** style front end for use with the Beta disc drive. Called the **Vision Desk Top** it sits in Rom in a bit of nifty hardware called the Beta controller which works with the Beta disc drive. The same company is also producing the **Beta Pack** which is a bunch of five discs' worth of utility programs for use with the drive. Lastly there is the Beta **Boot** program which lets you do all kinds of nifty stuff with Beta drive files — like one-touch loading. Other stuff is on the way and for those interested more details can be got from Reinhard Kowalski, 21A Telferscott Road, London SW12 0HW.

● It was decided, many moons ago, in the depths of an organisation known as the software industry, that something should be done to help impoverished software buyers. And what better than by giving them ten great games for the price of one great game? You don't believe it? Well it's true. It's called **Backpack**, and it's being co-ordinated by Ian Stewart of Gremlin and Rod Cousens of Activision. The titles include such gems as **Monty on the Run**, and **Star Strike** and **Night Gunner**. Even better, the whole thing's in aid of the NSPCC, so you can have the satisfaction of getting a lot of games at a knock-down price, and giving money to charity

● It is our sad duty to inform you of the demise of Saga Systems. Saga filled a need for decent keyboards to beef up the rubber keys of the Spectrum. Now, perhaps with the 128K+2 keyboard proving such a success, Saga has finally been forced to close down. Saga boss David White had a meeting of Saga's creditors on June 9th. Saga will be sorely missed.

● Incentive has launched a new adventure label to compliment the Gold Medallion lable. It's going to be terribly exciting, because it's going to feature two Gold medallion games for the price of one, £7.95. Just before you all rush out and look in your local software shop for this fantastic new deal, let me tell you that the label is called Double Gold, and that should no surprise to anyone.

TWTMTW
THAT WAS THE MONTH THAT WAS

By pricing the 128K+3 at £249 Amstrad may have made its first mistake since taking on the Spectrum fourteen months ago.

In fact Amstrad is in danger of making with the Plus 3 all the same errors it made with its CPC6128 a year earlier.

Amstrad's boss is quite open about his primary objective – to make lotsa cash, a lot better than the Sinclair alternative, to lose lotsa cash.

But by trying to maximise short term profit and run both the Plus 2 and Plus 3 machines in parallel – like he tried to run the CPC464 and 6128 – just won't work.

As with the CPC series the price of the disc machine is being kept artificially high to make room for the cassette based machine underneath.

What happened with the disc CPC machine was that people continued to buy the cassette machine, sales of the 6128 remained disappointing and, as a direct result, software houses never really got behind it and supported it with enhanced disc software.

So the disc machine became a kind of go-faster stripes version of the cassette based system only running software designed for the cassette machine that happened to be on disc.

Now the same fate is likely to befall the Plus 3. It will become a machine to use cassette software–only loaded from disc.

Until a user-base of around 100,000 machines has been established software houses won't consider supporting it with special disc-only games.

Amstrad shouldn't let that happen to the Plus 3. It's a great machine capable of running games of considerably greater size and graphic complexity than the Plus 2.

Now is the right time for a really well supported disc version of the Spectrum. And for that the price must come down. So come on Amstrad give us the Plus 3 at £175 by Christmas. You know it makes sense!

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F15 STRIKE EAGLE

STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW

Top Secret, Security Level 7. The following information is classified and must not be revealed to unauthorised sources. This review will self destruct in five minutes. And counting...

(This review is to be read in a pseudo-American accent). Hi y'all! How's about a little bit of combat fighter pilot practise? How d'you feel about a little' spin in the lill' ol' **F-15 Strike Eagle**, the noo sooper flight simulator game, featuring the high-tech, all-weather, air superiorty and ground attack fighter, the good ol' Strike Eagle itself? And while we're up an' away in the jet fighter, how's about a littl' ol' raid on Libya, or Tripoli or even the mean ol' Persian Gulf?

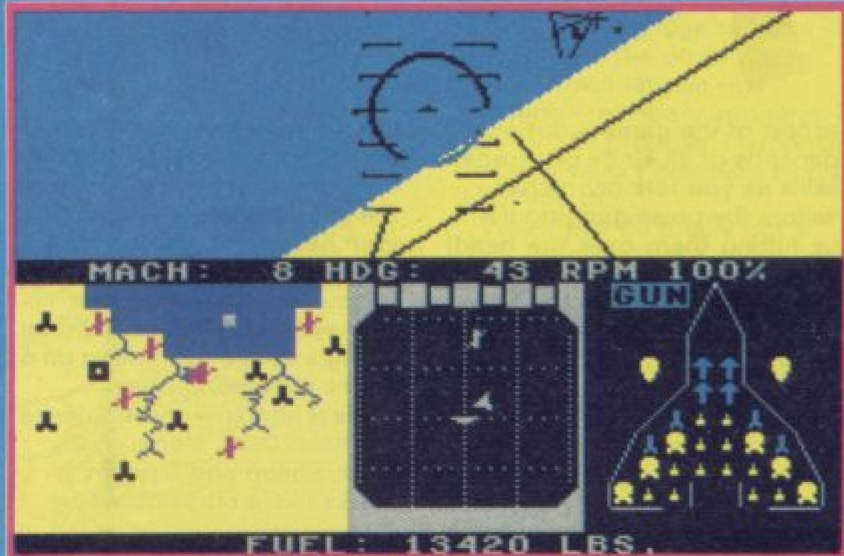
Simulation games are hot stuff in the States, and Wild Bill (Microprose head honcho) specialises in sooperior games. These are not games for boys, these are games for MEN an' no messing. So watch out Limey's, Wild Bill an' his jet plane on their way!

(This review has been interrupted for reasons of security. The remainder will be read in a BBC announcer tone of voice).

There is truly nobody to match Mircopose when it comes to committment to simulation games. The man who brought the Americans **Conflict of Vietnam** and **F-15** Strikes again.

F15 Strike Eagle is certainly one of the most complex around. The detail is precise, even down to processing of each fighter pilot's special passcode at the beginning. Without the correct code it is impossible to gain access to all the weapons aboard the aircraft. And what a lot of weapons there are! Shells for the destruction of heat-seeking missiles from enemy bases. Bombs to destroy the aforementioned enemies. Medium, long-range, heat seeking missiles. Radar blocks for all sorts of nasty bits.

And those are just the



weapons. There are extras. Before you get to bomb anything, you've got to learn to fly the wretched thing.

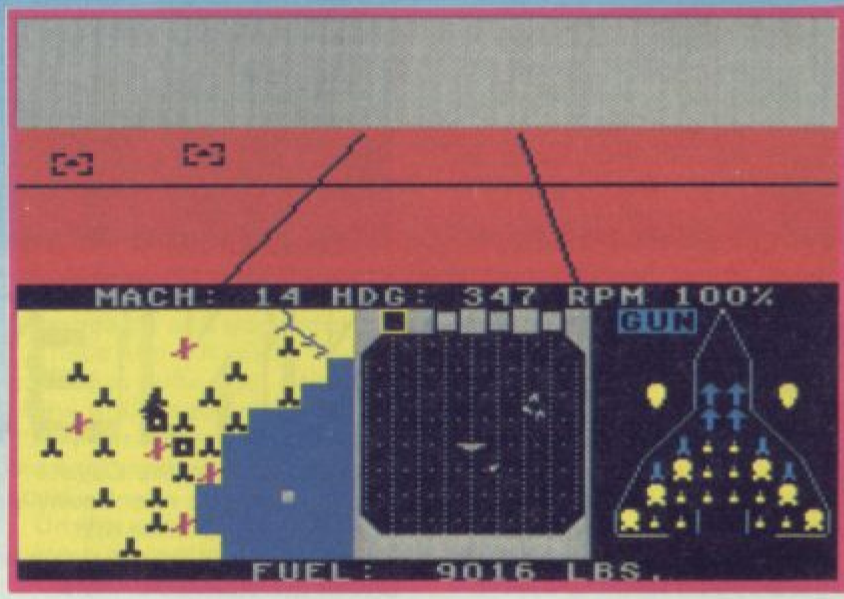
And that's not an easy task. There's climbing and diving, banking and turning, windspeed, altitude and acceleration to be considered. Just to keep you going in a straight line.

So it's very sophsticated, very complex. There are various attack missions you can go on and different problems in each.

Each is based on the real thing e.g. bombing Lybia (gulp).

There's no doubt that **F-15 Strike Eagle** is an intricate, highly detailed and very superior simulator. But any game that comes with a 40-page instruction manual is not going to be easy to get into. Although I willingly give full marks to Microprose for a supreme attempt at producing the definitive simulation, I feel that in the case of **F-15 Strike Eagle,** some gameplay has lost out to technical detail. Simulation or shoot-em-up, the point behind computer games is ultimately entertainment. Microprose places a lot of emphasis on its games teaching the player something. With **F-15,** it's taken that principle a bit too far... Added to the difficulty of controlling the darned thing, there's the problem of the graphics. Having been blinded by science, Microprose seems to have skimped on the graphics, they're really not so hot.

It's a shame that such programming detail game is let down by such simple graphics■



FACTS BOX

Technically detailed, but not necessarily fun to play. The Emphasis is firmly on simulation accuracy not gameplay or graphics

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE
Label: Microprose
Author: Sid Meier
Price: £9.99
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★☆☆
★★★☆☆ **6**

SU has always rated software out of five. Five was great and One was awful. It served us well enough but just recently we've been getting games that fall between the cracks in our star rating. We figured there ought to be a bit more flexibility so guess what?

From now on our star ratings will be out of ten. This means that a classic now automatically gets ten stars and one star is just as much of a dodo as before if not more so.

SOFTWARE STAR RATINGS

ARCADE REVIEW · TOOL-KIT REVIEW · WORK-OUT REVIEW · STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW · ADVENTURE REVIEW

★	Avoid this game under all circumstances
★★	Poor and/or massively overpriced
★★★	Dull and uninteresting, if not actually awful
★★★★	Fairly average. Nothing to get excited about
★★★★★	OK but nothing special
★★★★★★	Not bad, some good points. See before you buy
★★★★★★★	Pretty good. We were quite impressed. Worth a look
★★★★★★★★	Good stuff. Well worth the money
★★★★★★★★★	Very good indeed. A must buy
★★★★★★★★★★	Brilliant. Must buy at all costs
Classic	The best program of its type we've seen to date

TAI-PAN

With the exception of the odd decent soundtrack or two, there has been no reason, so far as commercially available software is concerned, to buy a 128K Spectrum.

Despite reasonably positive noises when the 128K machines came out, mostly the software house have done nothing to put their words into practice.

Yet now we have **Taipan**, supposedly a real 128K game – developed and conceived as 128K to make use of all the memory and extra sound. The idea is the process works exactly backwards – the 48K version is a stripped down version of the original instead of the 128K edition being a marginally souped up 48K. So, is **Taipan** anything special?

Taipan is big, that's one sign of the its 128K-ness – and it has a continuous oriental soundtrack. It isn't easy to describe – that's another. Call it an arcade, strategy, buying and selling game and you're halfway there. Playing techniques veer sharply between carefully considered wheeler-dealer financial planning as you allot money to different bits of equipment and the fast-reaction combat part of the game that can only be described as **Gauntlet** on the high seas.

The object is become the **Taipan** – head honcho merchant prince of the high China seas – that means making a lot of money. And that means trading – buying goods cheap in one port and selling them expensive in another. This is partly a matter of sound capitalist judgement – one aspect of the game – but also depends of all kinds of acrade skills as you forcibly recruit sailors (by press-ganging them, ie, hitting them over the head) or even offering them money to work for you (wimp) and then try to sail the China seas to another port. The sailing bit is where things really get rough – you are likely to be blown in the wrong direction, or you have to choose your route carefully depending on the time of year, or be attacked by pirates – some inland routes are safer (but slower) than others. On the other hand you may even want to do a little boarding and pillaging of your own.

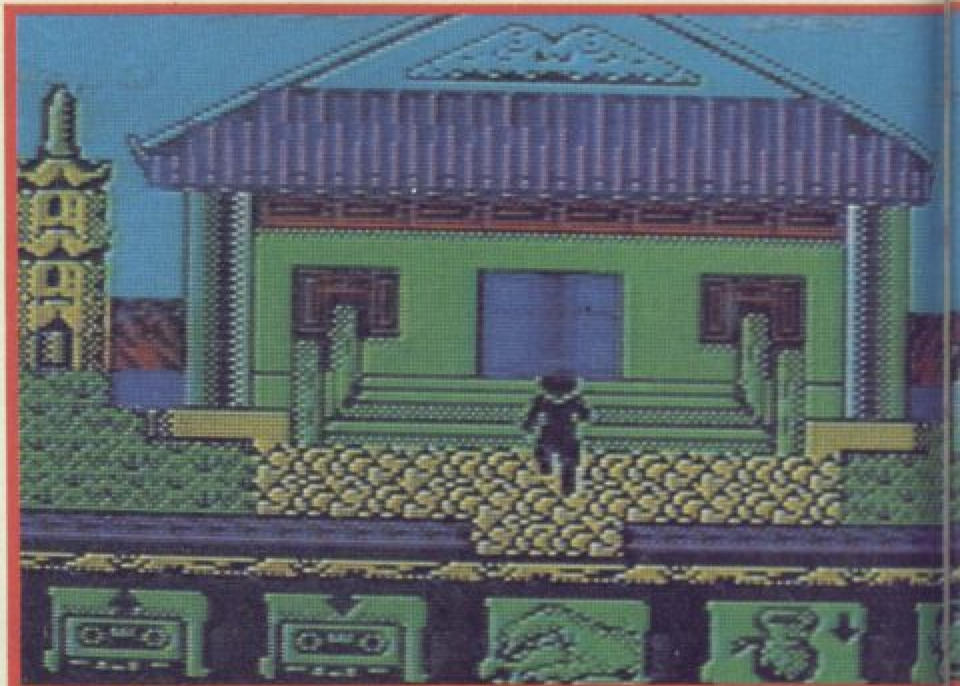
Actually stealing other people's ships is the best way of making money in **Taipan** (this is Thatcher's Britain after all). If you capture a ship (by killing the captain) and leave enough members of its crew alive you can control it as your own, thereby adding to your fleet and dramatically increasing the amount of freight you can carry.

On arrival at a port you must find a warehouse, sell off the ship's cargo, reload all your ships with new cargo and send them off again (an idle ship just drains cash in the form of crews wages and food).

There are other features to the game as well – in the first instance your adventuring is financed by a loan – a loan from the kind of people who chop your head off if you don't make the repayments.

You can also earn extra money (in the 128K version) by doing a spot of gambling on a series of rotating tiles representing mythical Chinese animals: Deer, Horse, Fish, Cow, Sheep and Dragon. It works like a cross between horse racing and a fruit machine and you bet cash on the likelyhood of one or another tile turning up. It is possible to make or lose absolute fortunes at this game and if therefore not to be recommeneded except to those who live dangerously.

So there is a lot to **Taipan**, but how does it actually play and what does it look like? The opening section is in port, and you get to run around and, in the first instance, look for the



ROAD RUNNER

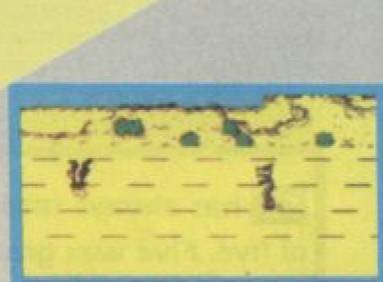
In sharp contrast to **Taipan**, it is pretty easy to summarise **Roadrunner**. You control **Roadrunner** and as you'd expect you run away as much as possible. Over a variety of scrolling desert landscapes you continue the age-old battle between an obscure desert bird and its arch adversary the Coyote.

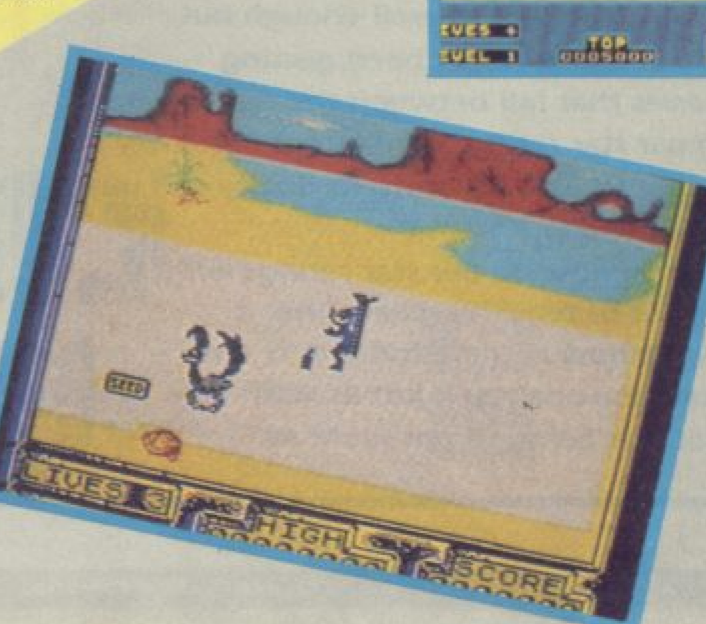
The spirit of the cartoon and indeed the coin-op of which this is a conversion, has been faithfully captured. The desert landscape has been drawn in surprisingly impressive detail. The scrolling is even half-way smooth. More disappointing is the size of the two protagonists – tiny little sprites. You get used to it, but surely they could be bigger. Maybe part of the reason is speed.

The success of the game (and the cartoon) is the sense of crazed pace at which chases occur. You run around the desert paths with the coyote Always only steps behind, losing time when **Roadrunner** has to stop and peck up seed.

As the level increases the desert paths get more and more twisty – any time lost by bumping into passing rocks or worse still, runing up blind paths, brings the Coyote that little bit nearer. You can't afford to make many mistakes.

Quite apart from the Coyote – who pursues you relentlessly – there is every chance that **Roadrunner** will be run down by one of the countless Acme trucks that zoom down the desert highway. The Acme Co are on their way to deliver ....











money to buy a ship and then a ship to buy.

Apart from the odd fact that I was offered a ship by the bank and money in the back of a restaurant I guess you could say this bit worked well. My biggest disappointment was in press-ganging – although I successfully thumped hundreds of drunks over the head I still couldn't knock them out – eventually I decided I needed a ship first.

Until you manage to get a ship, one of the other places you visit will let you buy anything – armoury, supplies etc – on the grounds, I suppose, that you've got nowhere to put what you buy.

When you do finally get a ship, supplies, arms and a crew it's time to quit the port.

Next up is to choose your route – choices are niftily presented on an area map. The choice you make is matter of safe but long routes vs short but very dodgy routes.

At some point in the game, on purpose or by accident you will be involved in a shipboard attack, or as it's usually known, **Gauntlet.** In this sequence the good guys and bad guys race around the ship deck (which looks astonishingly like a **Gaunlet** maze) biffing each other over the head. Your objective is to get to the captain and win the ship before you end up killing too many sailors, (you need them to man the ship). It doesn't look quite as good as **Gauntlet**– for one thing the sailors all seem to have either afro haircuts or fisbowls on their heads but it's fast and furious and a nice change from the rather sedate pace of the other parts of the game.

That's about it really.

I think it adds up to a game which is greater than the sum of its parts.

Despite being divided into very distinct playing sections the whole thing hangs together as well as (though in a completely different way from) **Elite** in its mixture of trading and arcade.

No individual element is mind blowing – mostly each bit is pretty good.

Taipan is very entertaining and moderately original. At last a 128K game to be proud of■



ARCADE REVIEW

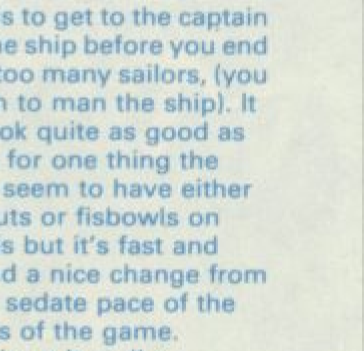
FACTS BOX

Perhaps the first 'real' 128K game. Taipan is a mixture of trading and arcade that works. Several cred points for Ocean

TAIPAN
Label: Ocean
Author: Sentient Software
Price: £7.95
Memory: 128K (48K cut-down)
Joysticks: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

9



the other feature of the game! Which is a wide array of whacky objects that the Coyote uses to get ahead of you. These include such authentic **Roadrunner** cartoon gems as jet-powered skateboards and pogo sticks.

That's about it really. The game has quite a lot going for it in the thrills-and-spills dept – it's certainly fast anyway, and the backgrounds are fairly good.

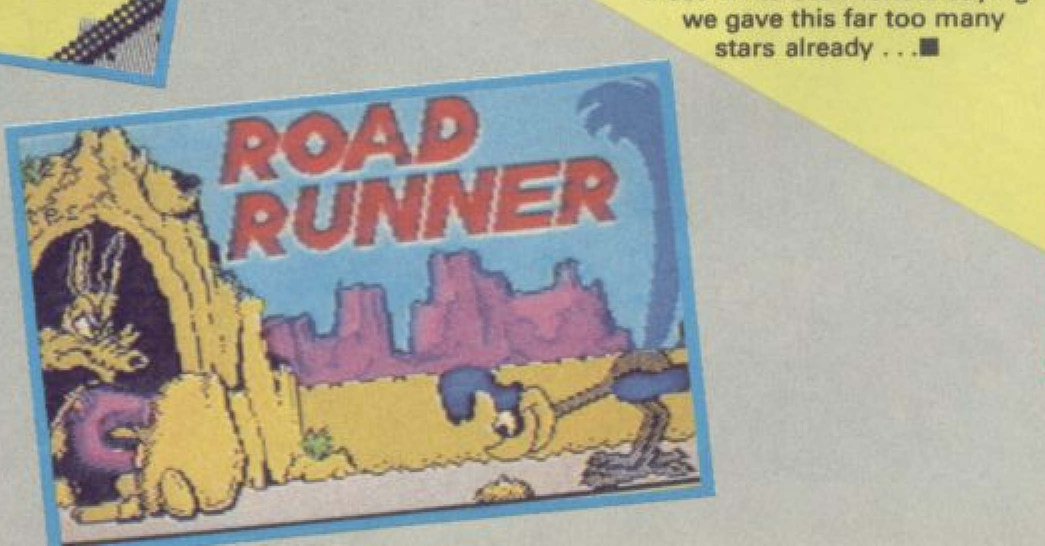
On the minus side are the minescule central graphics.

One surprising additional plus is the cleverness of the music at the beginning of the game which plays the Sabre Dance (I think) most effectively – can this be a Spectrum? But then during the game you get almost no sound whatsoever – rather disappointing in fact.

How entertaining you find the game will almost totally depend on your sense of humour (do you like seeing things go splat?) and how much you like being chased. (A sizable proportion of you would, I suspect, rather do the chasing – and, of course, there's no blasting.)

If both of these things score highly you'll like **Roadrunner** but if big graphics are more your bag – well I can see all those *Write Stuff* letters saying we gave this far too many stars already . . .■





FACTS BOX

Straightforward chase game – which captures the original cartoon quite well – let down by small graphics

ROADRUNNER
Label: US Gold
Author: in-house
Price: £8.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Ricky Sullivan.

7


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THING BOUNCES BACK

SINCLAIR user



Boing! Bouncing has been with us for quite a while. But with Thing Bounces Back we have been given the bouncy game to end all bouncy games. Gremlin has leapt into the fray with one of the springiest games we've seen in ages. Put the bounce back into your life and pick up a copy of Thing with a mightly £1.50 discount – that should put the spring back into your step. (That's enough elasticity – Ed)

SU SMASH OFFER

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Send Coupon to Thing Bounces Back Smash Offer, Mail Order Dept, Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS along with a cheque/postal order for £6.49 made payable to Gremlin Graphics

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SMASH OFFER

barbarian

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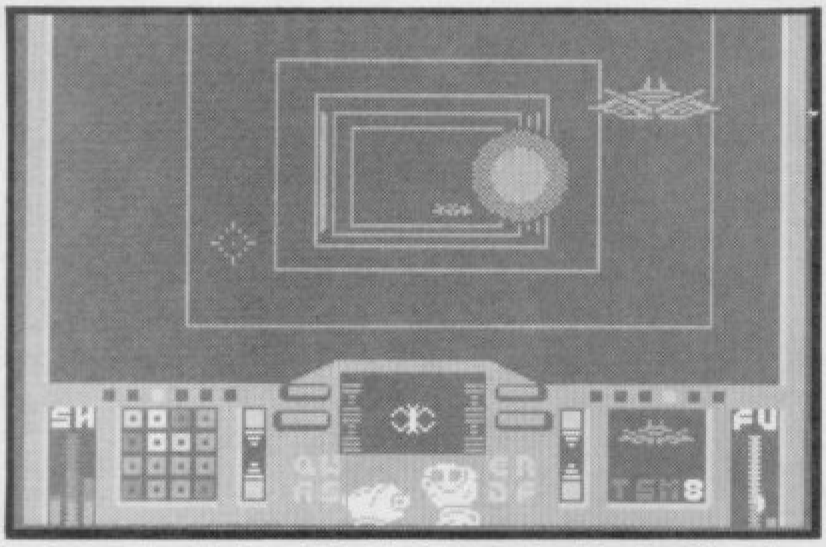
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SMASH OFFER







DEATHSCAPE

Wouldn't it be nice if you could trust people? If you could rely on people not to go back on their word? Well, you can't, especially if those people happen to be members of the Varg Empire.

For the past two hundred years or so, shunning debates and elections, the Sol Federation and the Varg Empire have been settling political disputes by each sending a starfighter into the **Deathscape.** The one that comes out not dead is deemed to be the winner of the argument.

However, the Varg Empire is determined to win the latest argument by cheating, and has sent in the Mothership to produce alien craft nineteen to the dozen. Being honourable people though, the Sol Federation are still only sending in one representative. And that's where you come in.

Yup – this is a 3D vector graphics into-the-screen blast. Fairly conventional stuff, but quite nicely done. It's also the second title (after **Greyfell**) to be released from the new Starlight label.

Destroying on-coming ships isn't as hard as it sounds. Your Zarquon C.A.M. III Multi-role fighter has all the latest equipment: plasma cannons, target seeking missiles, quadrophonic stereo sound and cigarette lighter.

Blowing up the Mothership is different. It's not quite as easy-peasy as it sounds. It's only possible to get on board and blast away if you've cracked the Varg code, and that's only possible if you've managed to destroy several Varg settlements. You can tell if you've cracked the code, because a series of blue lights will flash on a code board inside the space consul.

The flight consul itself is fascinating. As well as the usual spacey type things, fuel indicators, shield indicators and so on, there's also a neat little graphic of the pilot's hands. As the speed increases, the hands move further and further up the consul, as you press *Fire,* so do they. There's also the score grid and a map of the **Deathscape** itself, should you wish to call it up. With all this going on, it's sometimes more interesting to watch the consul than play the game.

Playing the game. The all important thing. Well it's fast, there's no denying that. It's essential that you keep on blasting away, because there are several different craft, and some of them need to be hit more than once to destroy them. Some are suicide teams which think nothing of ramming you and making you go wobbly. Some people just don't fight fair.

The best thing about the meanies is that they fly in fairly consistent patterns, so they're usualy quite easy to hit.

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of **Deathscape** is the gameplay. It's quite possible to get a really respectable score on **Deathscape** without really knowing what's going on. Just fly along and fire at random. But eventually you'll run out of fuel and that's your mission.

Deathscape is a good 3D action shoot em-up. If you're keen on shooting, with a little bit of strategy thrown in for good measure, then it's worth a look. But be patient, it takes some time to figure out what's going on■

FACTS BOX

Fast and furious flying mission with good clear graphics. Worth taking a look at if you're a shoot-em-ups person.

DEATHSCAPE
Label: Starlight
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

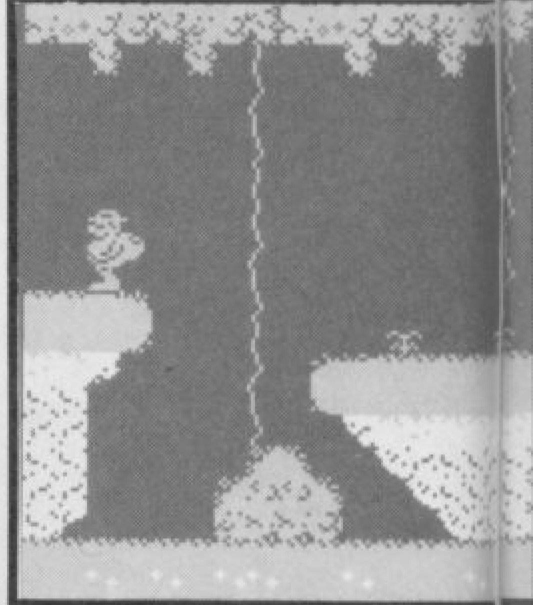
Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★☆☆
★★★☆☆ **6**

LIVINGSTONE I PRESUME!

June 12th, sometime in the Nineteenth Century. The search for Dr Livingstone has gone on for many months now, and I'm beginning to feel the effects somewhat. I became separated from the rest of my party, and am suffering as a consequence. Believe I am experiencing hallucinations of some sort.

I am feeling rather strange at the moment. I appear to have turned completely blue. All around me are strange animals and vicious natives, I am constantly bombarded with coconuts and other missiles. Am forced to shoot at anything in sight to stay alive. Every now and then I find myself stopping and going back to the beginning of my adventures. Strange forces are evidently at work here. . .



Alligata has bought the licence to **Supongo Livingstone!** from the Spanish

THING

Thing has lost none of its bounce in this sequel the C64 hit, **Thing On a Spring**. He's the same old Zebedee, with big eyes rather than a funny moustache, and with more muscle in his spring than a kangaroo on a pogo stick.

And he's still a hi-energy platforms ultra-long distance springy jump effort.

It's almost two years since Thing defeated the evil Toy Goblin, and he's probably almost forgotten the battle by now. But he's got to get back in there and shut down the computer, which has run amok, and is producing ghastly toys at a rate of knots. Which results in a speedy, frantic chase around the computer's circuits, travelling round pipes, bouncing on platforms and dodging the evil toys out to avenge their Goblin Master.

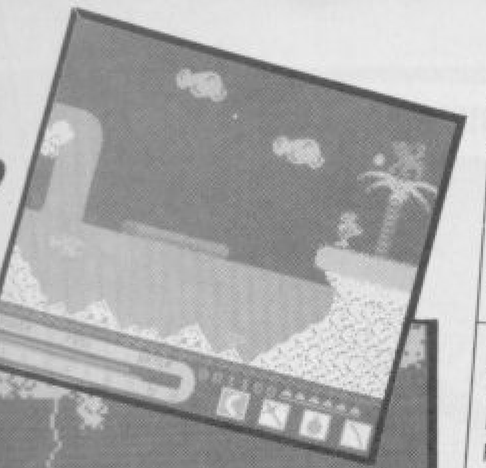
To shut down the computer, Thing has to pick up four pieces of a computer program – a disc, a tape, a listing paper and Rom. These are scattered around different parts of the computer's circuit, and can only be collected if you've got a sharp eye and quick reflexes.

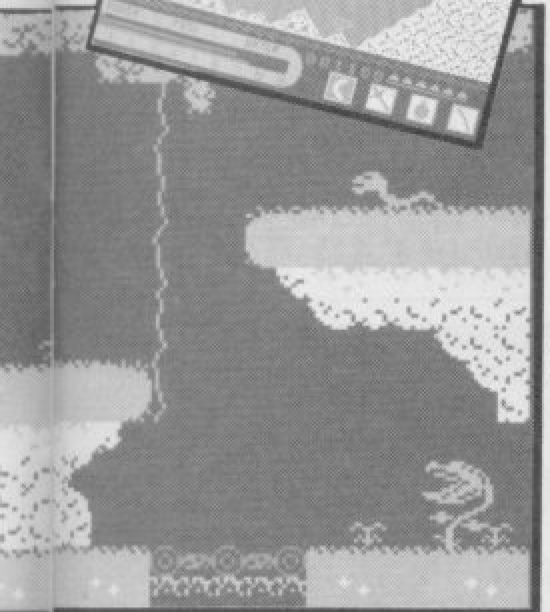
Because Thing is FAST! Sliding down chutes, flying up in air-streams getting caught behind trap doors, these are all part and parcel of playing the game. The trick is to know which chutes to slide down, and when to take a flying leap off the platforms. And don't forget that Thing loses energy when he bumps his head or if he bounces too hard. Ultimately he'll end up losing a life, which is mirrored by a broken-heart icon appearing on the screen.

First, though, you have to get in there! And that means rolling Thing around the pipes of a multi-screen plan of the computer complex. He moves in one direction, sometimes taking other randomly chosen route at a cross-section between pipes. Your object is to steer Thing towards one of the



E,





FACTS BOX

Nicely done seek and find game with a neat twist on the Stanley and Livingstone story. Tricky-thinking needed

LIVINGSTONE, I PRESUME
Label: Alligata
Price: £8.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★☆ 8

and given us **Livingstone, I Presume!**

You are the pith-helmeted (that's pith), back-packed, be-shorted Stanley, and it's up to you to wander around the island, avoiding the psychotic animals and natives who are out to kill you, collect the jewels and brave the underground caverns to find the good Doctor.

To make life a little easier, you are equipped with explorer-type things. A boomerang, a knife, a grenade (rather revolutionary for this period in time, but there you are and, most useful of all, a pole-vaulting pole. So you can walk, jump, pole-vault and kill and maim things a bit.

One might think, mightn't one, that turning the epic adventure of Stanley's search for Livingstone into a 'puter game would be a dead loss. Well, it's not.

Supongo Livingstone! did great business over in its native Spain, where it was described as, 'Fantastico, sensationale!' And there's no arguing with that.

Because actually it *is* a nice game. It's not terribly fast, there aren't an awful lot of things to kill on the way, but there's a lot of tricky thinking to be done.

In fact, Alligata thinks that you'll find **Livingstone, I presume!** so difficult that it's included a *Poke* in the instructions. So if you want to practise a bit, or if you're just a bit of a cheat on the quiet, you can just tap in that *Poke*, and get away with infinite lives.

ARCADE

Apart from the odd attribute problem, the slight unpleasantness involved in your feet turning green as you walk halfway into a bush, the graphics are nice, large and cartoony. My particular favourite is the man-eating plant, and it's probably worth wasting the odd life just to watch yourself being swallowed by the critter.

Livingstone, I Presume! could prove very popular. An original twist to the seek and find game, it's been put together with a lot of thought, and it's going to take you some time to complete all seven levels■

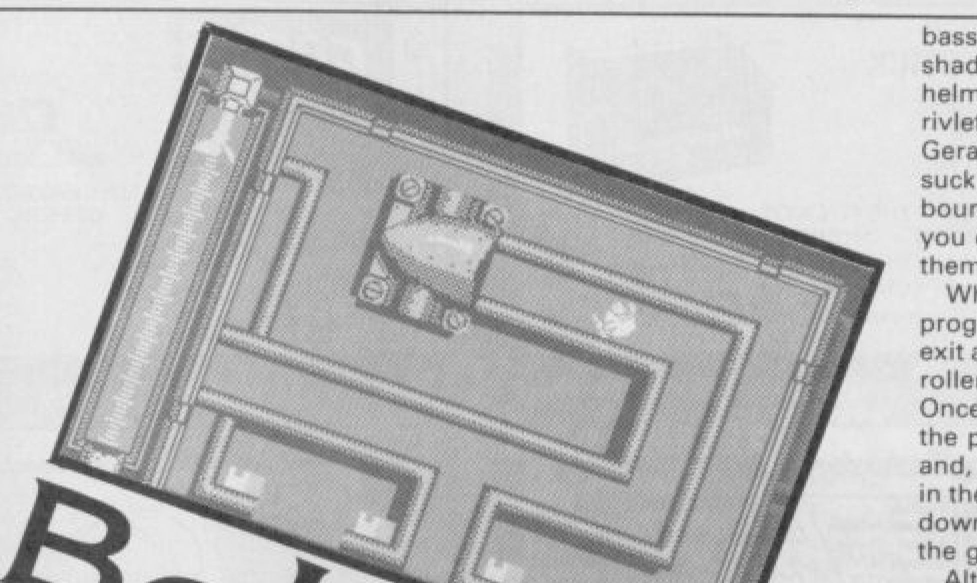
FACTS BOX

There's a new spring in this tale. Bigger than the original, but there's a shortage of new traps to fill the game map

THING BOUNCES BACK
Label: Gremlin
Price: £7.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★★☆ 8



G BOUNCES BACK

green airducts – into a room – and away from the Goblin's guards which roll around the pipes in an effort to bounce you away from your destination.

There is a way to dodge the guards, but it costs you. You have 10 'panics'. Each time you hit the panic button you can choose to change direction. But if you use up your panics for one life, you're in big trouble. You either have to rely on luck, and reach an air-duct, or you can hit the good old *Q* key again, and lose another life. Defeating the master computer isn't easy.

When you hit an air-duct it'll suck you into one of the Goblin's machine rooms where Thing can shoot down chutes, rise to levels on bubble ladders, or travel up and down pipes in search of program parts.

Once I'd been through a few of the rooms I felt a little disappointed because the traps, security devices and alien toys are always the same, although the construction of each room is different and usually well-designed . . . That's not so bad, though, because the authors have come up with dozens of different deadly combinations. For instance, you may find two ledges, one on top of another. You jump to the left and on top of a bubble ladder only to find that you're blocked to the left by a wall and a hidden door is closing down on your right. You're trapped and there's no way out except to press *Q* and lose a life, which will take you to the pipes. It's irritating but in this game it's a fact of life, so be careful where you bounce.

I've got no reservations about the monsters, though, and there are plenty of them. There are blue meanies which look like bassett hounds in *Miami Vice* shades, toads who wear crash helmets and go by the name of rivlets and, of course there's Gerald the Gremlin. All of them suck out your energy by bouncing up against you – all you can do is spring to avoid them.

When you've found a piece of program you go to the nearest exit and take your chance on the roller coaster pipeline again. Once you've got all four parts the program will start to run and, just like that Tron software in the Walt Disney film, it closes down the works and you win the game.

Although there's a lot of repitition in this sequel, **Thing Bounces Back** is a winning combination of alien action and strategy-building constructions. You don't need to have played the original Thing game to enjoy it but . . . **Bounces Back** has double the difficulty of . . . **On A Spring**, so if you've only just got your Thingies together warm up with the original first■





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CLASSIC MOVES

Its no fun getting stomped on. It's no fun getting wiped out by laser fire. I mean everbody loves a challenge but nobody wants to lose. In order to reduce stress levels across the country SU brings a brand new feature called Classic Moves in which we tell you how to kick that door, break that code, exterminate those aliens



If all that Barbarian from Palace Software meant to you was a free poster and Maria Whittaker in a bikini that had surely shrunk in the wash, then perhaps you will not want to read this feature.

If, on the other hand, Barbarian left you all sweaty and excited, clutching the joystick and gnashing your teeth in rage, bear with us. If you liked the blood, the guts, the gore, if you have a soft spot for the hideous and deformed hunchback, if you never win at Barbarian, read on.

We here at SU wanted to know more. We needed to know more. We were desperate to win, to knock the swordfighter's block off. So we went to the top. To Palace themselves. And they said, "Verily, you need to talk to the programmer." So we did, and this is what he said.



GENERAL HINTS

1. Remember, both you and your opponent can survive twelve blows. The thirteenth one means death with a capital D. All blows are graded according to difficulty, with decapitation scoring the most points.

2. If you find yourself in a tight corner, go for moves like the kick and head butt. If you're really up against the wall, try a forward roll, it gets you out of immediate danger by knocking your opponent off his feet. Follow up with a quick web of death. That usually does the required amount of damage.

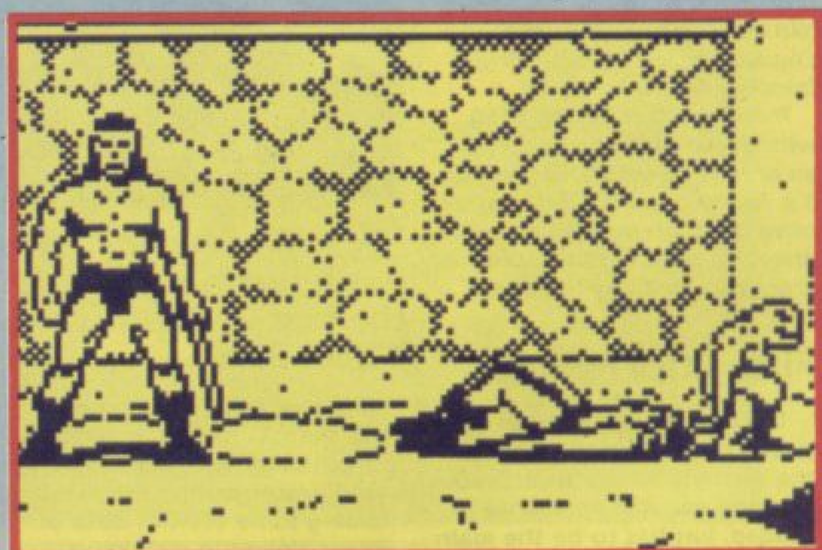
3. Use the flying neck chop only when your opponent has started another move. Otherwise he's got the time to see it coming, and can block it.

4. Dodge the flying thunderbolts! When (if) you reach the wizard, keep out of the way of the murderous bolts by jumping, ducking and rolling.

Those are the basics to look out for. As well as these important little tips, SU presents the Classic Moves Chart, showing which of your moves is going to do the most damage to your opponent (Table 1), and how to block anything that he comes up with (Table 2).

Table 1. COUNTERING YOUR OPPONENTS MOVES AT SHORT RANGE

OPPONENT'S MOVE	YOUR BEST MOVE	YOUR SECOND BEST MOVE
Neck Chop	Leg Chop	Roll Forward
Head Butt	Kick	Roll Forward
Body Chop	Roll Forward	Protect Body
Kick	Roll Forward	Roll Back
Leg Chop	Kick	Jump
Overhead Chop	Leg Chop	Protect Head
Flying Neck Chop	Head Butt	Kick
Web of Death	Roll Back	–
Roll Forward	Jump	Roll Back



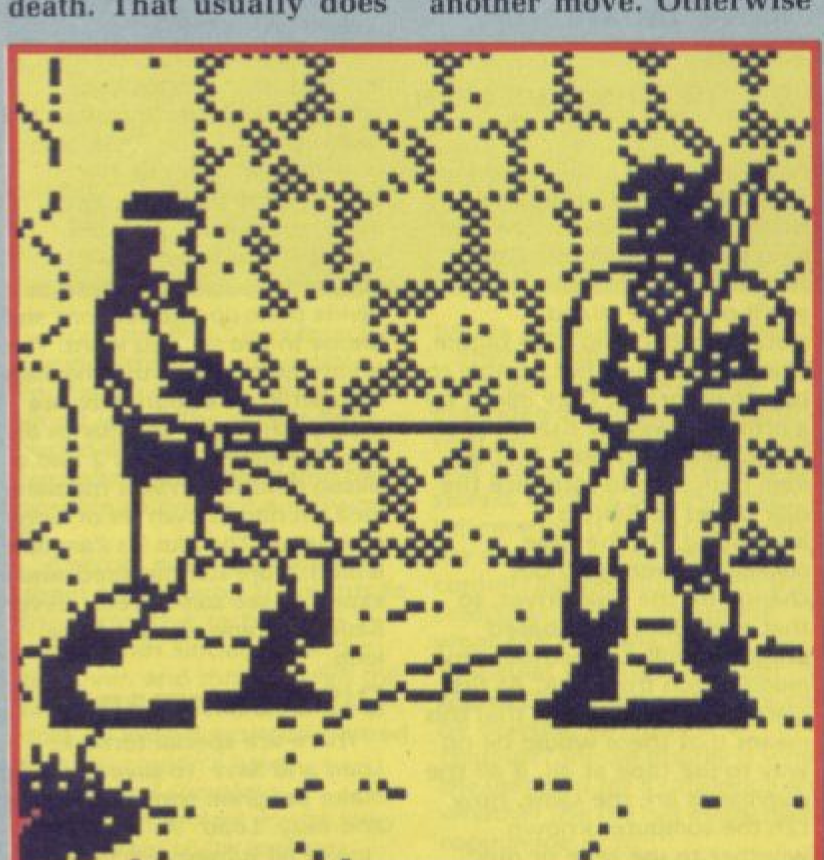


Table 2. COUNTERING YOUR OPPONENT'S MOVES AT MEDIUM RANGE

OPPONENT'S MOVE	YOUR BEST MOVE	YOUR SECOND BEST MOVE
Neck Chop	Leg Chop	Roll Forward
Head Butt	Leg Chop	Body Chop
Body Chop	Roll Forward	Protect Body
Kick	Web of Death	Leg Chop
Leg Chop	Jump	Roll Forward
Overhead Chop	Leg Chop	Protect Head
Flying Neck Chop	Leg Chop	Web of Death
Web of Death	Roll Back	Roll Back
Roll Forward	Jump	Roll Forward







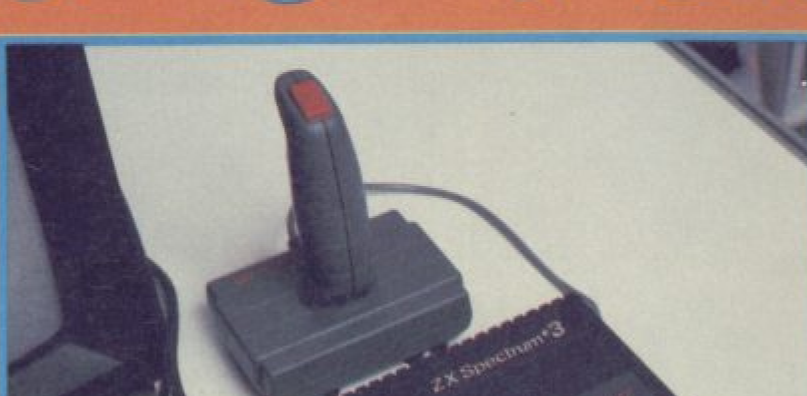
AMSTRAD'S PLU DISC-O-TECH

What can you do with a Spectrum? Amstrad, who parted with some £5 million for the rights to the beast, really had to come up with a good answer.

The Spectrum Plus 2 was their first attempt, and it hasn't been without its problems. Still, it was a rush job; only five months elapsed between the Easter buyout and the autumn launch. And Amstrad claim to have sold about half a million.

Now it's been over a year since Amstrad got its corporate mitts on the machine, and England expects great things from Big Al.

The Plus 2 is down to £150 with a free SJS1 joystick (form an orderly queue), and the Plus 3 is nearly out. At £250, maybe more out than in. It's got a disk drive, it's back in black, but has it got compatibility? Let's see...



SU's spies have been let loose on an unsuspecting Amstrad and here it is: the first in-depth review of the new Spectrum 128K+3.

First Impressions

The disk drive, sitting in peacock livery on the right of the machine where that famous Amstrad cassette deck once resided, just has to be the main talking point. There's double the Rom space inside the machine: 64K's worth holds the Disk Operating System (Dos), extensions to Basic and various other odds and ends as well as the original 48K Spectrum Rom and the 128K's editor and menuing system. Also added is a parellel printer port (8-bit, unlike older Amstrad designs), and extra printer support in the software.

Cassette software is still supported buy you'll need a Walkman or similar plugged player, to plug into what remains of the old 128K+2's sound socket.

The disk drive is (of course) Amstrad's 3" format. It claims compatibility with Amstrad's word processor, the PCW8256, holding some 450K of data on double-sided flip-over disks. That's about 178K per side, which isn't as much as modern drives and disks are capable of. Not by a long way. However, the twin considerations of price and compatibility make the choice of format seem quite sensible. Considering what software superheroes can cram into 48K of gamespace, 350K should keep them going for quite a while.

There's a connector for a second disk drive at the back of the machine. As well as Amstrad's own, there is scope here to hook up a 3.5" or 5.25" drive, so people with Discovery or other interfaces shouldn't panic unduly. It'll still need the appropriate leads and some clever software, but it can't be long before the third-party army rush in to fill the vacuum, if you'll pardon a mixed metaphor. But, and it's a biggie, Plus 2 owners will not be able to buy an up-grade. They might be a little annoyed at that.

The method chosen by the Rom designers to interface the disk drives to Basic is interesting. All the tape commands work without change on the disk drives, so that most Basic tape-based programs will run without any modification from disk. At first glance, you might think that this means that there would be no way to use tape at all. If all the commands are the same, how can the computer known whether to use tape or disk when you *Load* "FROGSTAR"? The answer lies with device names.

Devices

Device names are an ancient trick, dating back to the dinosaur days of CP/M (of which more later) and 16K machines. The Spectrum Plus 2 knows about four devices: tape, disk 1 (the one built-in), disk 2 (that optional extra), and the Ramdisk. It calls them T:, A:, B: and M:, and to use one particular device you include the name of the beginning the name bit of a command. So to load a program from tape, you'd do

Load "T:BOOBALOO"

Similarly, to save a program to disk 1 (which is the one built into the Plus 3), you'd type

Save "A:GOODIES"

The Ram disk is a way of soaking up the extra Ram provided. Like the Spectrum 128 and the Plus 2, the BASIC can only deal with about 40K directly (if it could manage more, compatibility would suffer). If you want to write bigger programs, you need to divide them up into sections and *Merge* in the bit you want. This is very quick if you use the Ram disk, which is designed to use most of the same commands as the real disks. The Plus 2 had a silicon disk, which was the same idea but had its own set of funny commands. The Plus 3's Ram disk is much more standardised, and I expect to see some pretty clever Basic programs about before long.

DISC Commands

There are special forms of *Load* and *Save* to save time and make program conversions nice and easy. *Load* "A:" means "make all subsequent *Load*



US 3

commands use disk 1''. *Save* ''T:'' makes all the *Save commands which follow work on tape. So the one line Basic program*

Load ''T:FRED'':*Save* ''A:FRED''

copies FRED from tape to disk. Inter-disk copying is done by using, well, *Copy*. *Move* also gets a look, and acts as a rename command. There aren't any brand new keywords – all of the new functions are implemeuted by novel (and sometimes bizarre) combinations of the existing commands.

Format is used to set up a disk when it's used for the first time. These commands were used with the Interface 1 but – shock horror – the Plus 3 isn't Interface 1 and Microdrive compatible. You can plug in Interface 1, but it won't work. The reason lies buried deep in the Plus 3 hardware, so it's not going to be possible to produce a software fix.

Amstrad were over a barrel about Microdrives. The rights to the Microdrive technology stayed with Sinclair after the takeover, and this included the code which is in the Interface 1 Rom. So even if Amstrad wanted to, they couldn't have guaranteed complete compatibility. And maybe they didn't want to. In any case, Microdrives are now off the menu.

Another ex-Microdrive command pressed into service is *Cat*. It's most ingenious use is to help out with transferring tape software to disk. Spectrum tape files can be Basic programs, machine code or data, they can automatically *Run* when they're load, as they can have memory addresses associated with them to tell the computer where to load them. All this information is held on a 'header', which is the short burst of data recorded just before the main file on tape.

There's also a *Cat Exp* command, which produces extended information about the stuff on disk. It also gives a vital clue about the way the files are stored, because some of that information is concerned with file attributes. File attributes contain information which the computer uses to determine what can be done with a particular file. They concern things like whether the file can be deleted, whether the computer should display it when the user asks for a catalogue and whether the file has every had a copy made of it.

CP/M

CP/M is a funny thing. The initials stand for Control Program/ Monitor, and it's a standard operating system for computers based around the Z80 microprocessor, which all Spectrums are. Until the IBM PC came about, most business programs ran on machines with CP/M. Now not many people are going to worry about running *Wordstar* or other 'professional' programs on the poor old Speccy, but there are a lot of sophisticated software development programs available for CP/M.

CP/M doesn't require much from a computer. But all Spectrums to date have been no good, CP/M wise. The main problem has been that CP/M needs a computer that has Ram at the start of memory. Until now, all Spectrums had Rom at that point, but the Plus 3 has an optional all-Ram mode which is just perfect for CP/M. The screen and keyboard aren't so well suited, but those are minor problems. Amstrad haven't as yet said that they will provide a Plus 3CP/M (which would make the CPC 6128 a little vulnerable), but it comes as no surprise that Locomotive, Amstrad's tame firmware house is already working on a version of CP/M for the Plus 3. The temptation of all that cheap business software is just too great.

Disc operating system

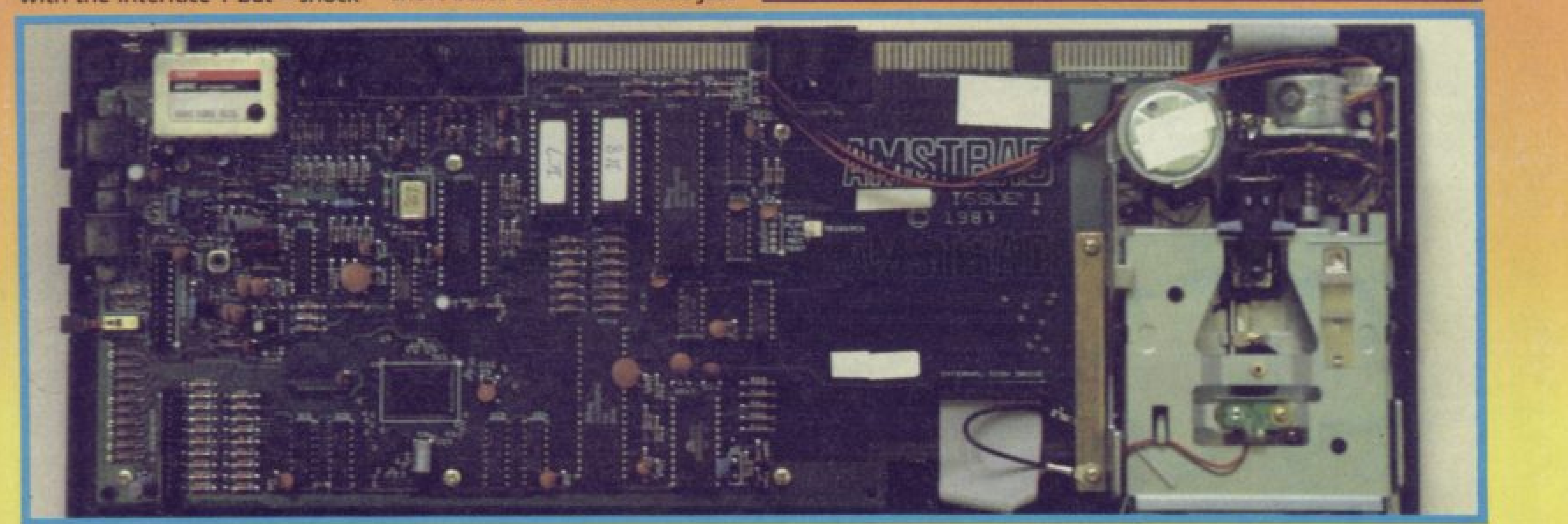
The Disk Operating System (+ 3DOS) was written by Locomotive Software, who have a long and mostly honourable association with Amstrad. It comes as no surprise that it bears a distinct resemblance to Amsdos, the Dos for the CPC464 and 6128 which Locomotive also wrote. Plus 3 Dos has lots more features available to machine code than are hooked into Basic.

For example, there's a complete set of file handling routines hidden away. Basic users can't *Open* a file to disk, or *Print* stuff to a file. All the code is there, but the Basic hasn't been modified to use it.

Bundled games

This is probably a good point to mention the six free games on one disk that Amstrad are generously dolling out with the computer. Some of Ocean's finest (well, almost finest) are here: *Gift from the Gods, Mailstrom, N.O.M.A.D., Supertests 1* and *2* and *Cosmic Wartoad*. The nicest thing about disks is that it only takes seconds to realise that the game you've loaded is as interesting as stewed spinach, rather than ten minutes.

There is also the interesting possibility of games houses selling both Amstrad and Sinclair versions of their wares on the one disk. This should (but may not) make it cheaper and more economical to distribute stuff on disks. This is vital to the Plus 3's success – if the price of disks make it impossible for software houses to produce programs for disk use only then it'll have a hard time competing with the Plus 2.



Speed

In use, the disks are a bit lacking in the speed department, compared to existing interfaces like the Disciple. Once a file has been found and loading started, it's all as swift as you might hope for, but it can take a few seconds to get that far from the *Load* command. Still, the difference between disk and tape is massive enough to soak up a couple of seconds here and there. Once you've used the Plus 3 with disks, going back to cassette is almost impossible.

The guide book

The boys from Brentwood redeem themselves somewhat with the manual. This is a much-extended and megamodified version of the Plus 2 book, and it covers just about every aspect of the machine that anyone could want to know about. The backbone of the book is still the original Steve Vickers idiosyncratic learn-yerself Basic course, with all the old gems (on string-matching: ''Which of these is the lesser, ''EVIL'' or ''evil''?).

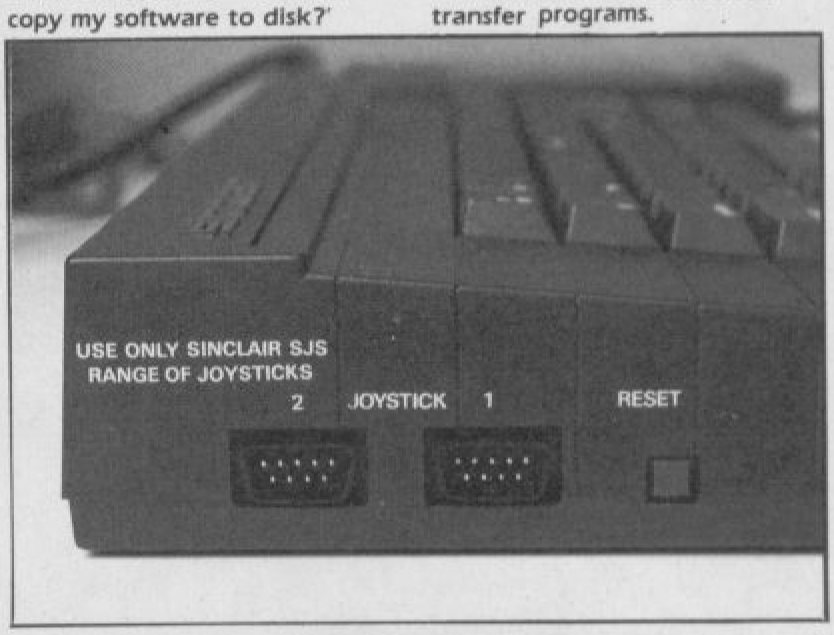
There's a lot of extra stuff about disks, the new memory maps, the extra printer stuff and

128K+3 REVIEW

a lot of very detailed information on the Dos. There's a whole bunch of new demo programs, including some which are genuinely useful and some which are mind-numbingly naff. To be honest, there's not a great deal of scope for anyone who wants to publish a book on what Amstrad left out; – there simply isn't much. However, the book is pretty badly organised and the layout is unhelpful. 330 pages is a lot of book, and it (like the Plus 3) has obviously grown in fits and starts from the days of the ZX81. Coherent it isn't.

Most questions that a new users, or an existing Spectrum user wanting to up-grade, might ask are answered in the manual – somewhere. The 'how do I copy my software to disk?' problem is given special consideration. However, the simple tape-to-disk tricks provided in the Plus 3 Rom only works on ordinary Basic programs; games and other machine code stuff will need transfer programs.





COMPATIBILITY WITH OTHER MICROS

An all important one this for those wishing to upgrade. There are some serious problems. These relate less to software – games from the 128K+2 should run without problems – which should be fairly but more to do with hardware.

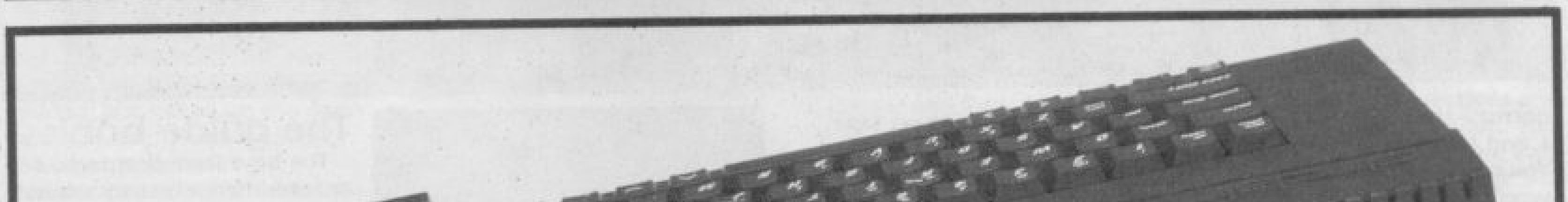
These are two big differences with the +3 compared to all previous Spectrums. The first is the video output, this has been altered such that it will no longer drive monocrome monitors – maybe important if your using a Spectrum for business or educational purposes. The second problem is more significant, the edge connector has been altered so that the 9V line no longer exists. This has been used in the past to drive various peripherals like modems. These will no longer work with the +3. So if you are up-grading check your add ons specifications do they use the 9V line? They won't work.

Interface 1 considerations aside, the Plus 3 looks at first sight to have a good chance of running lots of old software. Like the Plus 2, it's got a 48K Basic mode, where it tries very hard to look like an old-style Speccy. In this mode none of the new hardware can be accessed, of course. It's a pretty good replica of an old Spectrum. There were some Rom locations that were changed on the 128K Spectrum, and this results in incompatibilities with badly-designed joystick adaptors. These locations have been largely replaced in the new Plus 3, but there are still a few differences which could knobble a game or two.

Game writers who use existing Amstrad computers to generate code on should be pleased to know that you can take a machine code file generated on a PCW8256 and turn it into a proper Spectrum file with the quaintly named *Copy "filename" To Spectrum Format'* command.This takes a standard Amstrad file, and puts a Spectrum header on the front of it. The Speccy can then load it in with *Load* "filename" *Code* command, and there is the program, transferred without recourse to RS232 or special programs.

The Spectrum can also load a program from disk automatically. The idea is that the user unwraps the latest games on disk, turns on his Spectrum, shoves the disk in the slot and presses one button. From them on, everything progresses smoothly.

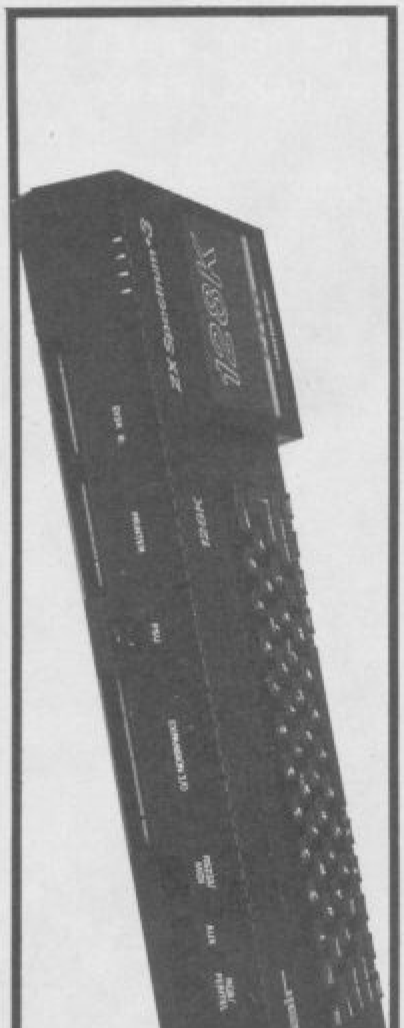
First of all, the Plus 3 looks for a special program on the disk called "*". This program can't be produced by BASIC, so if the computer finds it, it knows that it was put there by a software house. If it finds "*", it loads and runs. If it can't, it trys to find, load and run a Basic program called DISK. If that fails, the computer gives up and goes back to the user. If the computer can't find a disk at all, it goes into a routine which loads any program from tape. Just like the Plus.





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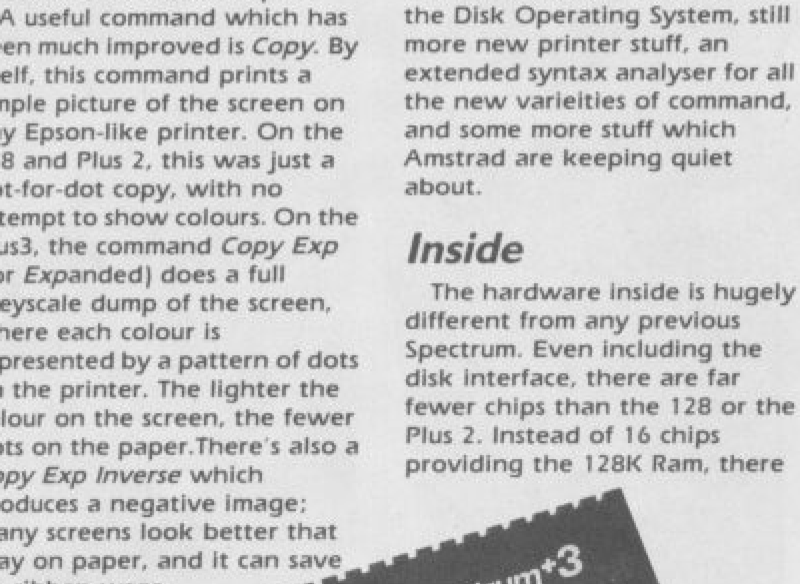
Continued from page 34



Printer support

The new printer support is pretty comprehensive. As well as the existing Plus 2 serial printer port, there is a parallel interface. One of the areas most prone to problems with computers in general and the Spectrum in particular is the interfacing and usage of printers. With the Plus 2 the problem was exacerbated by a peculiar interface to Basic which made sending control codes (special commands to switch in different styles of printing) to printers virtually impossible. With the new Plus 3 Basic, any control code can be sent, or the old Plus 2 way of doing things can be selected for program listings. Printing can be either the old serial port or the new parallel one, which means virtually any printer will plug into the Plus 3. Any programs in existence which use either the existing Basic *Lprint* or *Print* commands to drive printers should run unchanged. The same is true of any program which uses the 'official' machine code ways to drive a printer, which should cover most popular business programs. In any case, very little conversion work should be needed. Switching between the serial and parallel interfaces is managed by the *Format Lprint* command; *Format Lprint* "C" diverts output to the parallel interface, and "R" switches it to the serial port.

A useful command which has been much improved is *Copy*. By itself, this command prints a simple picture of the screen on any Epson-like printer. On the 128 and Plus 2, this was just a dot-for-dot copy, with no attempt to show colours. On the Plus3, the command *Copy Exp* (for *Exp*anded) does a full greyscale dump of the screen, where each colour is represented by a pattern of dots on the printer. The lighter the colour on the screen, the fewer dots on the paper.There's also a *Copy Exp Inverse* which produces a negative image; many screens look better that way on paper, and it can save on ribbon wear.



The legendary Spectrum 128K keypad, nominally supported on the Plus 2, has been consigned to the same fate as the Interface 1. The socket into which it once plugged has been relabelled Aux, and most of the supporting code in the Rom removed. The electrical connections are still the same, so things like modems which drove the hardware directly have a chance of working. The editor keypads commands (things like 'delete line' and 'go to top of program') are still active by pressing odd keyboard combinations, as they were on the Plus 2.

Basic

The Plus 2's Basic editor survives unchanged, bugs and all. To the untutored eye, 95% of the Basic has survived unchanged from the 128/Plus 2. Deeper in, the organisation of the Basic has mutated considerably. The original Spectrum had 16K of Rom, which had all the Basic and editing code in it. The 128 and Plus 2 added an extra 16K Rom, which had the editor, new printer support and other little extras in it. The Plus 3 has two more 16K Roms in it, which hold the Disk Operating System, still more new printer stuff, an extended syntax analyser for all the new varieities of command, and some more stuff which Amstrad are keeping quiet about.

Inside

The hardware inside is hugely different from any previous Spectrum. Even including the disk interface, there are far fewer chips than the 128 or the Plus 2. Instead of 16 chips providing the 128K Ram, there are just four. There are two 32K Roms, holding all the aforementioned software, the RS232 driver chips, the sound chip, the TV picture chip and the TV sound chip. All the video circuitry and 'glue' (the chips that stick everything together, electroncially speaking) are contained in one postage-stamp sized gate array chip.

This tiny fleck of silicon and plastic has the honour to be the first chip to have been designed at Brentwood, as opposed to one of Amstrad's many subcontractors. As well as actually producing the video signal, it also manages the new memory configurations, the joystick ports and the printer port.

This chip is a completely new design. It's difficult to know at this stage whether it's introduced some incompatibilities with the old hardware, but it seems to work with all the games I tried that also worked with the Plus 2. It doesn't have any new video modes; you're still stuck with the same screen format as the original Spectrum. Colour clash, it seems, will be with us always. I tried a few bits of hardware, joystick ports and the like, and it all seemed to work. Even as complex as animal as Ram's Music Machine operated without a murmur (except when I sample a mumble).

Verdict

Amstrad has been criticised about many aspects of the Plus 2, and it took quite a bit of it to heart. The redesigned TV circuits gave a much better sound quality and a generally nice picture all round. The socket at the back of the computer that provided sound on the Plus 2 new doubles as a cassette connector. It's a Walkman-style socket, with one connection for loading and one for saving. Using an external cassette recorder should make loading a little easier for those poor souls with slightly shaky hyperloaders. The Plus 2 cassette recorder saga suggest that there's a lot of that of thing about.

The joystick connectors are once again Amstrad's own peculiar standard (boo hiss). Still, any joystick interface that worked with the 128/Plus 2 should workd with the Plus 3, and all new stuff that's come out since the Plus 2 hit the streets with a dull thud copes with Amstrad's eccentricities in any case. Grey or black.

Amstrad's other main eccentricity, that of pricing the Plus 3 at £250 quid, is a little more difficult to explain. It's competing pretty much head-on with the existing disk-based games micro that Amstrad produce (the CPC 6128), which you can get for about the same price with a monitor. Perhaps it's all an attempt to make the Plus 2 look more attractive before the Christmas wars set in, but's difficult to escape the conclusion that Amstrad have gone a little bit gaa-gaa over the pricing.

At £200, it would be an exciting product. At £175 or £50, it would be an Amstrad bestseller. At £250 it's overpriced, and Amstrad must surely know it. Their other actions, dropping the price of blank disks, and giving software houses machines to work with, are at odds with the price. It can't cost much to produce. Let's face it. It's a Spectrum with disk on the side, and in these days of ST's and 500 Amigas it just might not make it. Amstrad – it's too expensive..■

Rod Whitcomb



THING ON A SPRING II

Bling! Twang! Twang, twang!

Crash.

Gremlin has a new game with boing and wobble. (Pause for the arrival of the men in little white coats to take away insane springy member of SU team).

Ladies and gentlemen, we apologise for the absurd spring in this competition. Normal service has now been resumed.

Renowned as we are at SU (Bing) for our extraordinary competitions and our completely OTT (Flang) prizes, we bring you the Thing Bounces Back (Boing Boing Boing) Competition.

Gosh, this is getting (Twang) to be a bit of a habit.

All you have to do is answer the questions and then bounce down to the post-box and send the coupon off to the address below. Singly bingly spring.

WHAT DO YOU WIN?

Well, ten first prize winners will walk away with copies of the game and a slinky spring, which will walk up and down stairs, tables, persons, small animals – whatever.

Fifteen second prize winners will be awarded with a copy of the game. And (there's more) one hundred third prize winners will get an extremely enviable Thing on A Spring um... thing of their very own, to do with as they like.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

Complete the coupon and send it off to: The Bouncie Bouncie Bouncie Fun Fun Fun But the Most Wonderful Thing on a Spring Compo, Sinclair User, Competition Mega-Control, 14 Holkham Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough PE2 0UF

*Gremlin and EMAP employees can just bounce about for all they're worth, but they still won't win...

Which of these is a popular season, just before summer (tick one box)?

a) bounce ☐
b) twang ☐
c) spring ☐
d) twizzle ☐

Name ....

Address ....

....

....



DE BOYS ARE GETTING UPSET

Warmongerous us? Encouraging violence in society? Nah. We've just got this 1928 Thompson sub machine gun to give away that's all.

I mean you can't actually kill anybody with it (unless you use it as a hammer) 'cause it's been twiddled but it's the real thing – the stuff of countless gangster movie wipeouts.

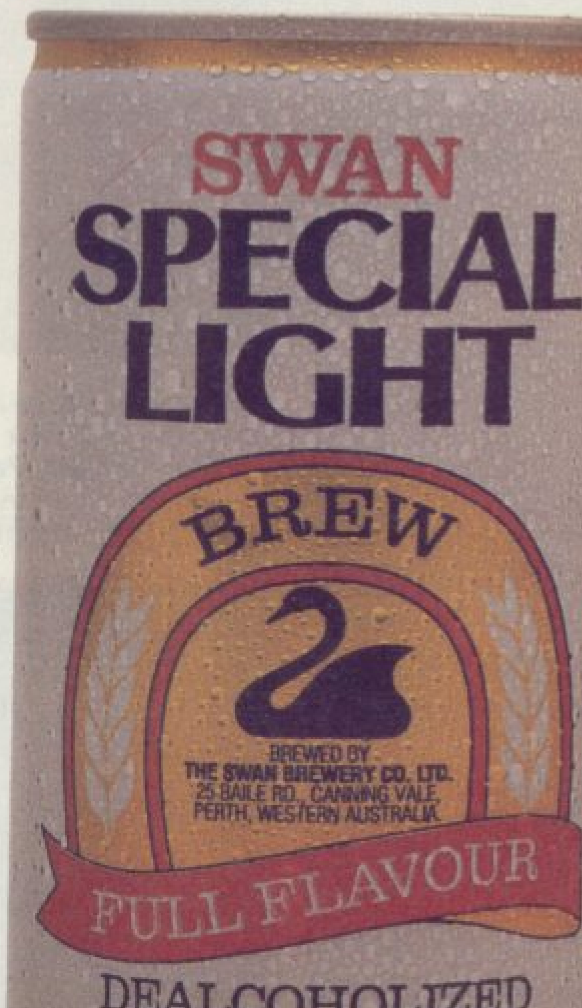
Why have we got this gun? To celebrate the release of **Prohibition** from Infogrames – the first arcade game from the company and a seriously spiffing shoot out on the waterfront itself.

Anyway if you'd like to win the gun of the game or one of the countless bonus prizes (well OK it's thirty actually) including five large and five medium **Prohibition** T-shirts, and twenty brand spanking new copies of the game read on. Tasty, or what?

What you have to do.

We though we'd check out your gangster credentials with a few simple questions:

*Members of Infogrames, EMAP and other no good low-lifes may not enter otherwise it's St Valentines Day for you.



1) What was Prohibited in Prohibition?
   a) Jazz
   b) Booze
   c) Italian food
   d) Communism.
2) What is a speakeasy?
   a) A new late-night chat show
   b) An advertising space salesperson
   c) A kind of mouth deodorant
   d) An illegal drinking club
3) What are Spats?
   a) A kind of fish
   b) A form of greeting used by football supporters
   c) A kind of protective overshoe
   d) A Olympic gold medallist swimmer.

Fill in your answers on the coupon below and send *it off to:

"I-haven't-got-a-concrete-overcoat-but-I-do-have-a-Pac-a-Mac" Competition, Sinclair User, Mega-Control, 14 Holkham Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough PE2 0UF. And don't forget to say what size T-shirt you would want if you win. Closing date is July 30.

COUPON T. Shirt ....
Name ....
Address ....
....
Answers (tick one box for each question)

1. a) ☐ b) ☐ c) ☐ d) ☐
2. a) ☐ b) ☐ c) ☐ d) ☐
3. a) ☐ b) ☐ c) ☐ d) ☐

SINCLAIR user T★O★P T★W



▲ Feud

1	(1)	FEUD	BULLDOG	£2.99
2	(2)	BMX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	£1.99
3	(7)	ENDURO RACER	ACTIVISION	£7.95
4	(3)	OLLIE AND LISA	FIREBIRD	£1.99
5	(8)	SPEED KING II	MASTERTRONIC	£1.99
6	(5)	GAUNTLET	US GOLD	£9.95
7	(16)	SIX PAK	ELITE	£9.95
8	(6)	CURSE OF SHERWOOD	ELITE	£1.99
9	(4)	PAPERBOY	ELITE	£7.95
10	(11)	THRUST II	FIREBIRD	£1.99
11	*NEW!*	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE	£2.99
12	(10)	180	MASTERTRONIC	£2.99
13	*NEW!*	AUFWIEDERSEHEN MONTY	GREMLIN	£7.99
14	(22)	TRANSMUTER	CODE MASTERS	£1.99
15	*NEW!*	HEAD OVER HEELS (CLASSIC)	OCEAN	£7.95
16	*NEW*	DEEPER DUNGEONS	US GOLD	£4.95
17	*NEW*	BRAINACHE	CODE MASTERS	£1.99
18	(17)	VAMPIRE	CODE MASTERS	£1.99
19	*NEW!*	WORLD GAMES	US GOLD	£9.95
20	(24)	SUPER SOCCER	IMAGINE	£7.95



▲ Head Over Heels

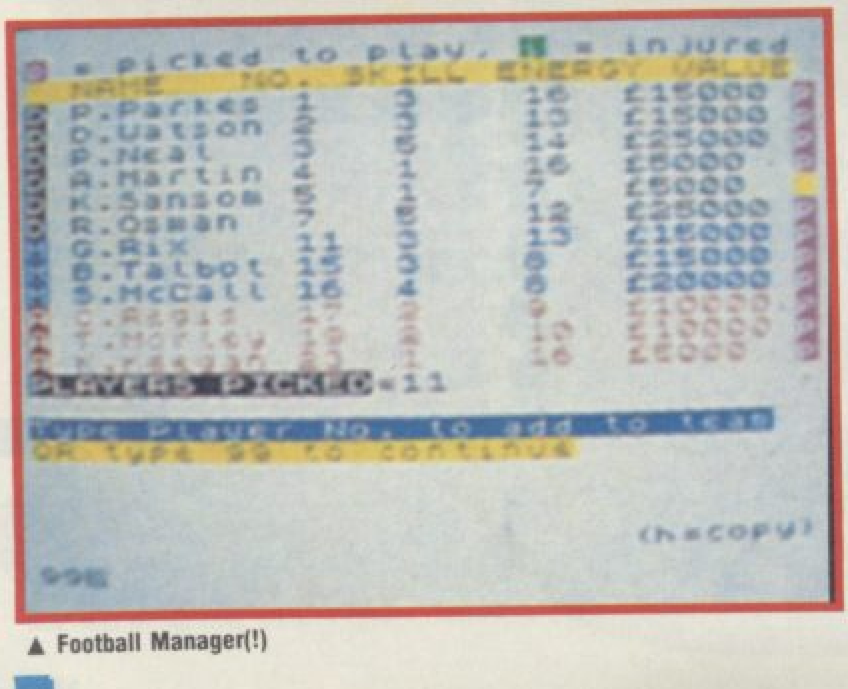


▲ Ollie and Lisa

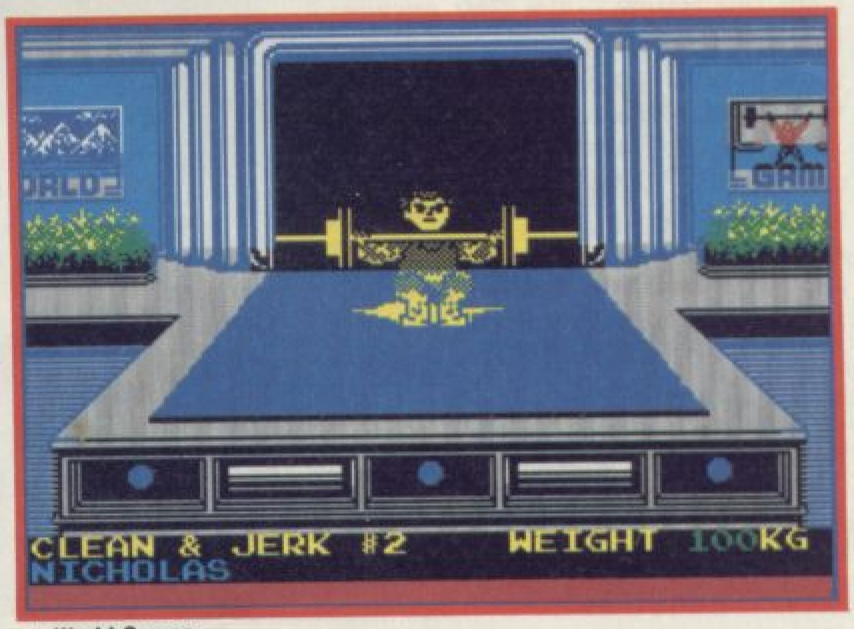
HOTTEST CLIMBERS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Feud is still in the No 1 slot though Enduro Racer looks to be coming up fast. Elite's Six Pak proves nobody ever went broke putting out a decent compilation and astonishingly enough Football Manager, a



▲ Football Manager(!)



▲ World Games

E ★ N ★ T ★ Y

Compiled by Gallup for *Sinclair User*

Highly entertaining tussle between two wizards with great graphics and 12 spells to conjure with	★★★★☆
Brilliant conversion of the C64 hit. It's genuine simulation – a biker's paradise with smooth slippery action	★★★★★
A coin-op conversion that pits other top software houses to shame. Sets a new standard for arcade tie-ins	★★★★★
A graphically good but dull pot-boiler with cute characters. Predictable but well executed	★★★★☆
Passable 3D racing game with bikes, not cars. Two-player option makes it more fun. On budget its good	★★★☆☆
As good a conversion of the classic arcade game as could have been wished for. No-one should be disappointed	★★★★★
Top value mix of oldies and newies. From good to bad – but seven on one tape can't be bad	★★★★★
Not unlike Hewson's Firelord. This is collecting objects and killing things in a rustic setting. Nice graphics with not too much variety	★★★★☆
Excellent conversion from the coin-op. Inevitable hardware restrictions make the game less 'special', but it's still great	★★★★★
A worthy successor to Thrust. Combines deft joystick control with speed of thought. Great	★★★★★
Years old and written mostly in Basic but still the definitive football game. Brilliant.	★★★★★
Could have been boring and tedious. Instead it's funny, exciting and impressive. A closet hit	★★★★★
A Rolls-Royce platforms game with lots of nice ideas. Monty goes from strength to strength	★★★★★
Despite some boring moments this is generall a pretty reasonable shoot-em-up	★★★★☆
A very wonderful ticket to runny-jumpy-avoidy city. Choc-full of puzzles and humour. Buy it	★★★★★
More of the same monsters puzzles and traps from THE game. US Gold could have used more imagination	★★★★☆
Dull and unoriginal arcade game of a style that everyone thought was gone forever. Not worth it even on budget	★★☆☆☆
Very nice sequal to the budget hit involving more frills and twiddles	★★★★☆
True to the style of Winter and Summer games, this quirky mixture of sports is well programmed and a lot of fun	★★★★★
Nice try, Jimmy, but unless you're prepared to spend time training you'll never make it out of the fourth division.	★★★★☆

game older then most SU readers is back again, rejuvenated at a budget price tag. **Auf Wiedersehen Monty** s, as predicted, bounced in at a creditable 13. The only surprise about **Head over Heel's** no 15 position is that it isn't higher. If it doesn't get to No 1 the entire SU team will sulk.



▲ Brainache

CHART ★ ★ ★ ★ BREAKDOWN

ARCADE

1	ENDURO RACER	ACTIVISION
2	GAUNTLET	US GOLD
3	PAPERBOY	ELITE
4	AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
5	HEAD OVER HEELS	OCEAN

ADVENTURE

1	SWORDS AND SORCERY	PSS
2	PAWN	RAINBIRD
3	SYDNEY AFFAIR	INFOGRAMES
4	GRANGE HILL	QUICKSILVA
5	DRACULA	CRL



▲ Head Over Heels



▲ Grange Hill



▲ Vulcan



▲ BMX

SIMULATION

1	WORLD GAMES	US GOLD
2	SUPER SOCCER	IMAGINE
3	LEADERBOARD	US GOLD
4	ACE OF ACES	US GOLD
5	INDOOR SPORTS	ADVANCE

STRATEGY

1	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE
2	FOOTBALL OF THE YEAR	GREMLIN
3	VULCAN	CCS
4	TRIVIAL PURSUIT	DOMARK
5	SILENT SERVICE	MICROPROSE

BUDGET

1	FEUD	MASTERTRONIC
2	BMX SIMULATOR	CODEMASTERS
3	OLLIE AND LISA	FIREBIRD
4	SPEED KING II	MASTERTRONIC
5	CURSE OF SHERWOOD	MASTERTRONIC

LETTERS



Just thought that I would give a little praise where it is due. Bearing in mind the pressures of producing a quality mag amidst such tough competition as Crass or Your Sin Clair, I feel I have been a little harsh in piling heaps of personal abuse upon you in recent years, and I unreservedly apologise. I especially apologise to Jon Riglar, who is a real shining wit.

The listings are absolutely and completely free of all typing errors, mistakes, bugs, duplicated lines, etc, etc. The staff writers produce work completely free of any political bias and the other contributors bring us such well-informed information as *"Dungeans and Dragons"* by far the most famous role-playing board game.

The covers are the best. I mean how many other computer mags produce stunning pictures based upon the latest software releases? The new articles on things which have nothing whatsoever to do with Sinclair, Amstrad or computers are very relevent and make excellent reading. The fantastic Smash Offers mean that we, the humble reader, can save, say, £3 on a copy of Battlefield Germany by sending the coupon together with a cheque for £9.95, which compared to the price quoted on page 97 of issue number 61 is a fantastic saving. One slight quibble about the posters though. They all seem to have little holes in the middle and yet the free advertising supplement provided in issue number 62 did not. May I suggest that you nail the ads to the centre of the mag and have the poster in loose in future?

Now what? Oh yes, more praise (I hope you appreciate this). Code Talk and Background Noise, I am sorry, just Code Talk is/are excellent. The competitions in Sinclair User are excellent, and that competition where everyone who entered won at least some sticky labels was great. I wonder who got the 128K+2? Another competition which was well done was by the magnificent Gremlin; you know, the Caption Competition? I am not praising it, or indeed anything else mentioned in this letter, merely because I won it several months ago and I have not seen the £20 yet, because I am sure that it will arrive in due course within the next day or so.

R Miles
Broadstone
Dorset

PS I bet you thought I was just writing to give some more abuse. You all do a marvellous job. Great. Fantastic. Wonderful. Excellent. Brilliant.

★★★

I'm writing to ask whether or not a score of 2428020 in Activision's Enduro Racer is the top score? I scored this the day after buying the game (which was well worth £9.99 in Boots).

Also I have found a cheat mode. When the countdown from '3' begins, press the "Graphics" key and hold it down. You can then start moving the bike before "go" appears.

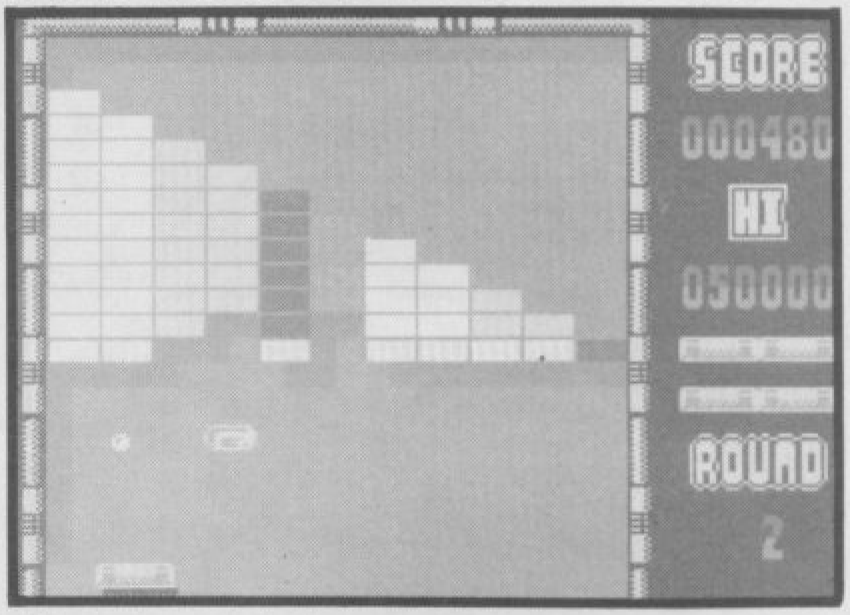
If you then keep the "graphics" key held down throughout the game, most of the stages are shortened, therefore giving you more time to complete each stage.

Chris Habberley
Porthcawl

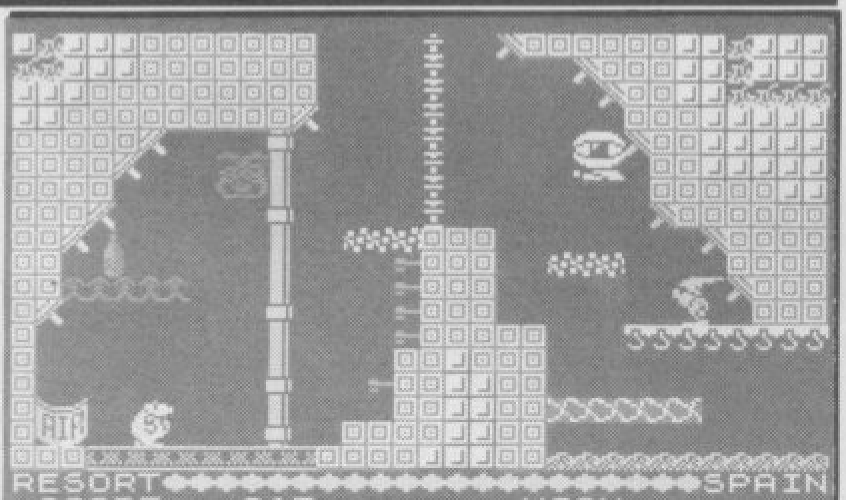
PS Please, please, please, please, print this letter in your totally brilliant mag.

● *Oh all right. Just this once.*









After reading your "Platforms perfection" in the May issue of SU, I rushed out to buy a copy of "Aufwiedersehen Monty," keeping in mind the fun of being able to "create my own layout". I rushed back home and loaded it.

I was amazed. It was fab but after a few goes I crashed it, and then tried to find the game designer. I searched the whole tape with no success, except some extra parts after the game had loaded.

Behold the SU platform game family tree, a largely misleading guide to Aufwiedersehen Monty

Shame on you SU

Robert Geraghty
Erdington,
Birmingham

● *What can we say? We are duly shamed.*

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

The Plus Two stinks! The +3 is probably worse. OK, the 128K+2 is very nice, a computer with a built-in tape recorder but the lack of a counter shows how badly thought out it was.

Of course I would prefer a +2 or 3 to my rubber 48K, but that's not the point.

If Sir Clive is producing the disc spectrum it surely would be far more better than that silly plus three!

And you know why? Because Sir Clive's major interest is satisfaction for the user but Alan Sugar, the boss of ASSS (Alan Sugars Secret Service, known as Amstrad), is just interested in the CASH!

Anon
Lisbon

PS This ain't the first time to write you. But my other letter wasn't printed because I didn't mention no politics, I didn't call a div.

● ***Thank you unintelligible of Portugal.***

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Having acquired May's edition of SU I decided, before reading it from cover to cover, to enter all three of the compo's. I looked in the contents, and answered the questions for Star Raiders II on page 51 and win a bike on page 73. But, to my horror, the compo for Indoor Sports (a game I'd like to have) was not on page 92 as stated!

So, after searching through the magazine from beginning to end and getter rather angry, I found the 'Indoor Sports' compo on page 99.

Please Ed could you learn to count, or at least get yourself a calculator?

G E Jones
Hengoed

PS On page 106 in the 'Krack Out' preview you say Ocean's Arkanoid, I'm sure you meant "Imagine's Arkanoid".

PPS Through 90 degrees, I think not. Try 90 degrees next time you describe 'Krack Out' from 'Arkanoid'.

PPS Here's 1p towards a dictionary.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Whilst browsing through my friend's copies of Crash and Sinclair User, I found that there were tons of letters complaining about Dixons (Boo Boo). I have had problems with the Dumb D's, so I have made a DIY Guide To Dixons. (Use to get a refund or to get a duff product changed).

1. Be nice and ask politely. (TIP, make sure you know about the product so they can't do you out of a lead or operating software etc...).

2. Start raising your voice to the staff and telling people that are about to spend a bomb on the latest thing. "If it doesn't work they won't refund or change it," or something like that. (TIP, as soon as you start disrupting their business enough they should help).

3. Come back the next day with a sleeping bag and flask, repeat No 2.

Ryan Wheeler
Doncaster
S Yorks

PS The manager of Doncaster's Dixons tried to tell me that a 8056 Serial Printer (termal) took a ribbon cable!!! Ha Ha Ha He He He Ho Ho Ho!

I am writing to complain about your March issue of SU. If you cast your eyes to the chart breakdown, you will see the Konami's Coin-Op Hits and Computer Hit Ten are in the budget chart.

Could you please tell me what £9.95 games are doing in your budget chart chart?

James Newman
Amersham

I have recently purchased Masteronic's excellent AMAUROTE. I loaded the game on my 128K+2 using the tape loader option as the instructions indicated. The introductory titles at the beginning stated that the music was by David Whittaker (like Zub and Glider-rider), but to my great surprise and disappointment there was no Funky soundtrack, just the normal 48K bleeps.

I exchanged my copy for another, but this was the same. If possible, please could you ask Mastertronic what is going on? Is there a copy with music? Where can I get one?

Allister Brimble
Devon

'THING' BOUNCES BACK

TEST DRIVE A THING TODAY!



Quartz Halogen 'Pop-Up' headlights just like a Porsche 924.

Audible warning device pressing results in a 'boing, boing, boing' noise.

Extra large flappy cheeks, watch out for tweaking grandads.

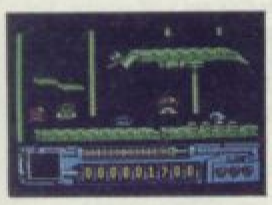
Trendy designer cut off T-Shirt (causes nasty draught round your coils).

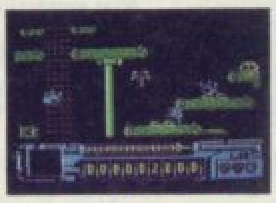
Stupid grin, take a quick look in the mirror when playing this game. See what we mean?

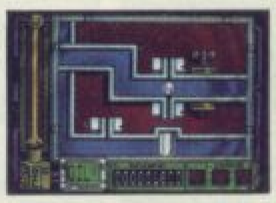
Leather boinging gloves for a sure fire grip on that joystick.

All round independent coil spring suspension guaranteed for over 100,000 boings.

Size 14 racing tread flippers for inflight stability and a sure-footed landing.





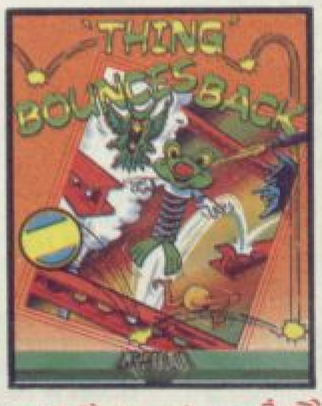




Gremlin's springiest star is set to bounce straight back into a new adventure.

Following his world saving exploits against the evil toy goblin and his monstrous toys, Thing's enjoyed his much needed recuperation, oiled his spring and is now raring to go. What next?... he must finish the job properly and halt the factory computer auto producing these hideous toys.

But as superfit as he is and fast as he can move there's danger hidden around every bend... goblins lurking to drain his oil, water rushing to bowl him over, iron chickens fielding dastardly deadly eggs.



A quick hand and dogged determination are needed if you're to get anywhere with Thing in his latest escapade.

Fast and furious action is the order of the day and a good sense of direction would be helpful to guide Thing round such a complex location.

Available on

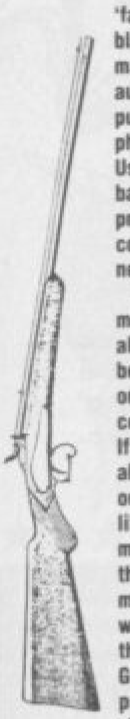
CBM64/128	AMSTRAD	SPECTRUM 48/128K MSX
£ 9.99 c	£ 9.99 c	£ 7.99 c
£14.99 d	£14.99 d	

DRIVE YOURSELF ROUND THE BEND WITH THING

GREMLIN GRAPHICS SOFTWARE LTD

Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Tel: 0742 753423. Sheffield, S1 4FS.

LETTERS

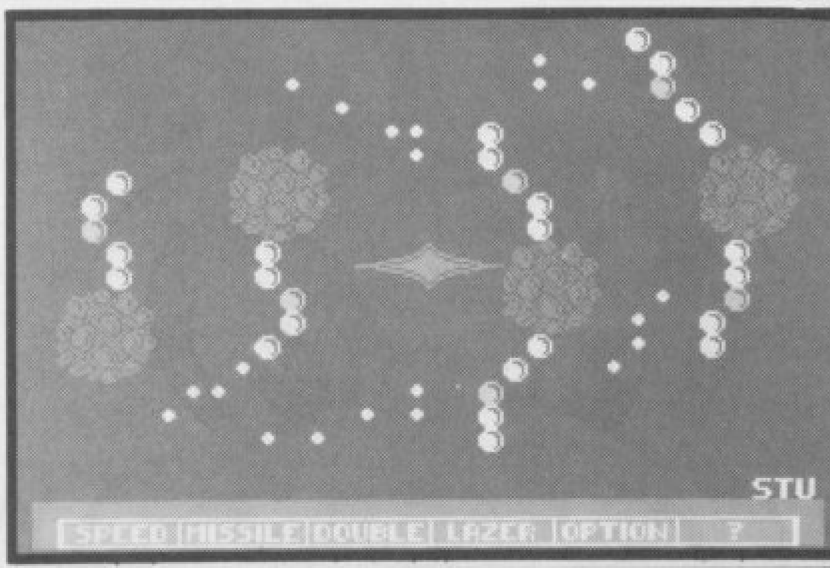


I feel that your recent article in the last issue of Sinclair User concerning 'fanzines' was cynical rubbish. You blatently slated off all the independent magazines you looked at and had the audacity to say that they were the worst publications ever to roll off a photocopier. I find it ironic that Sinclair User slagged off magazines for being badly produced and written, when to find probably the worst written and produced computer magazine in the world, you need to look no further than yourselves.

I run a small independent Spectrum magazine called Journal, (which I feel, along with many others, is much, much, better than Sinclair User) and we are now on Issue 2. We were going to send you a copy of our magazine. I'm glad we didn't. If you had written about us as you wrote about the other magazines, I'd have got our solicitors to examine it for possible libel. I'll be very surprised if the magazines involved don't write to you in the same manner. I have also persuaded my sister company, Spotlight Games, to withdraw from advertising in SU, and the company that owns us, The Spotlight Group, has also withdrawn from any possible advertising in Sinclair User. We shall take our business elsewhere. I challenge you to write back and defend the article in question.

Perry Stephen Buck
Journal Magazine





A number of changes were made to the Spectrum version of Nemesis to ensure a better game-play.

1. The second sidewinder that shows up in your picture was taken out because the game speeded up considerably if that was done. The decision was taken very late prior to release, on purely editorial grounds.

2. The mother ship, as far as I am aware, is still in the game – indeed graphically it is one of the high spots.

These are the only changes that I believe were made to the game between your seeing it and the final release version, aside from internal technical changes, to ensure that the game ran with sound effects and without jerkiness, but this would not have affected any graphics. Unfortunately I have not been able to confirm this directly with the programmers, having failed in my innumerable attempts to contact them: I assume that they, at least, are able to take advantage of this weather!

If there were any further changes made, then I will call you first thing in the morning, but I don't think that there were.

If you need any further info please don't hesitate to call.

Mike Daniels
Nemesis Management Co Ltd

I had a dilemma when I purchased the Spectrum Plus 2 computer. I had been used to my Saga 3 Elite keyboard with my old Spectrum, and despite the better keys on the Plus 2, it does not compare with the 'feel' and additional keys of the Saga keyboard. The answer was simple – connect the Saga keyboard to the Plus 2! After many enquiries I was unable to find anyone who could assist, therefore I set about the task myself.

The result is better than I hoped for. My computer sits at the back of my desk with disc and printer interface attached, and a single cable connects it to my Saga keyboard. I also included two leads in the cable which allow me to reset the computer from the Saga keyboard.

Fitting the cable simply involves opening up the computer and keyboard, removing the two keyboard ribbons and replacing them with the new cable. The reset leads are soldered on to the existing reset switch. No holes are drilled, nor is any other work required.

I am certain that some of your readers will be in a similar dilemma, so I am offering to make a lead to any specified length that fits all the Saga keyboards with all of the Spectrum computers. The cost, inclusive of all components and postage, will be £10.

Mr & Mrs M J Miles
150 Ashcroft Road
Ipswich
IP1 6AE



I would just like to mention that SU reviewed a game in your May edition, called *The Scepture of Bagdad*. On the screen you showed there was a palm tree near the left, and underneath it what looked like a bunch of 4 keys, and the keys look like the keys on *Gauntlet* when you die.

Christan Andre
Saltburn

● *Well you learn something every day don't you?*



I think most of your magazine is great, except the reviews.
What is written is very good, you tell us all about the game and the plot, but you don't tell us about the controls etc. People may see a game which they like and go out and get it. But once they get it home they may find that the joystick which they own is not compatible with it, or the keyboard controls do not suit them. I think you should tell us about these things.

As this is my first letter I don't expect it to get printed (please do).

Simon Kerr
Lancashire

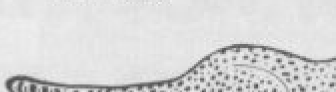


I know it sounds strange to speak up in defence of Dixons stores but I feel I must.

I purchased a 128K+2 in October 1986. I've red numerous letters in Your Sinclair and other computer mags, slating Dixons service. Anyway, we inherited the dreaded SJS1 joysticks and they seemed to work when the mood took them. We were not happy with them. But they were not faulty, just cheap. I later found out that new sets came with Cheetah 125 sticks.

I wrote to Dixons, who promptly wrote back offering to exchange them. Later that week I walked out of Dixons with not 125+ joysticks, but Cheetah mach I + worth £15! I only hope Dixon stores have enough in stock if you print this letter.

T Carney
West Yorks





After reading your article on the proposed Spectrum +3 with built in 3" disk drive, I thought it was a good buy. I, however, own a 5¼" disk with a formatted storage at 720K. Is it possible to connect it to the +3 and use it as drive 2 without interfaces?

If it is, do you consider it to be a good upgrade from the original Spectrum, as mine is due for retirement soon?

S Davies
Wiltshire

★★★★★★★★★★★★

I am fed up with reading letters from people who think *Zub* is a 'thrilling' game. I've never read so much Bull.../lies in all my life. WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? The game is repetitive, boring and very frustrating. How people can enjoy playing this drab I don't know. I would much rather play something like '*Manic Miner*' which clearly shows how I feel!

M Dunham
Soham
Cambs

★★★★★★★★★★★★

I wonder if you would be able to help me. My father owns a BBC model B computer with 5 and quarter inch disk drive, Printer (centronics) and a RGB monitor. I myself have a Sinclair Spectrum 48K (rubber key style). I would like information on where I could obtain interfaces to all or some of the aforementioned pieces of equipment.

Peter Orme
Winchester

★★★★★★★★★★★★

What great pokes you are turning out in 'Sinclair User'.

Keep up the good work.

Mr A J Marshall
Waltham Abbey

★★★★★★★★★★★★

Why, oh why have you changed Sinclair User again, can't you leave things alone? Whilst looking at SU in W H Smiths (Checking to see if it was worth buying! Ha, Ha! only joking), scream, confusion! You'd changed the Contents page!

At first I hadn't a clue what was where. After eventually finding my way around, I found that you had changed the "Classic" logo as well. But why?

Please, please tell me why you have done this, the other Contents page was better by far.

Steven Thomas
Llanelli

PS Jon Riglar is fab. So leave him alone you lot.

★★★★★★★★★★★★

That guy who went to Dixons was lucky. He might have gone to Currys. They have got bouncers there.

My Mother once bought a vacuum cleaner there.

May I take this opportunity to say how upset I am that Sinclair User has sunk to its present level. Whatever happened to the magazine you could walk into a shop and buy without any embarrassment? Whatever happened to those parts I looked forward to, like Hit Squad (which has now been replaced by a little column consisting of ½ page asking people questions like what's your colour kipper, and how illiterate are you?!)

Fergus J Paget
Erdington,
Birmingham

★★★★★★★★★★★★

SINCLAIR user

20 POKES FREE PART II!!

OK so you're pretty impressed with your Poke cards right? Thought so. You now have Pokes One to Ten of the hottest games around. But not all of you have the same ten pokes.

The thing is, there are twenty to collect in all.

So whata you do is either swop cards you have but don't want with someone who has one you do want OR you read on... because this is your chance to get the ten Poke cards you don't have from our top secret supply stashed in the SU vaults.

Gimmy, gimmy what do I have to do?

Cut out the Poke coupon from page 51 of last month's issue, stick it onto the space in the coupon below, tick the Poke Cards you want on the coupon below (up to ten) and send the completed coupon in to us together with a stamped addressed envelope.

Is that all? Don't I have to answer three questions or something?

No.

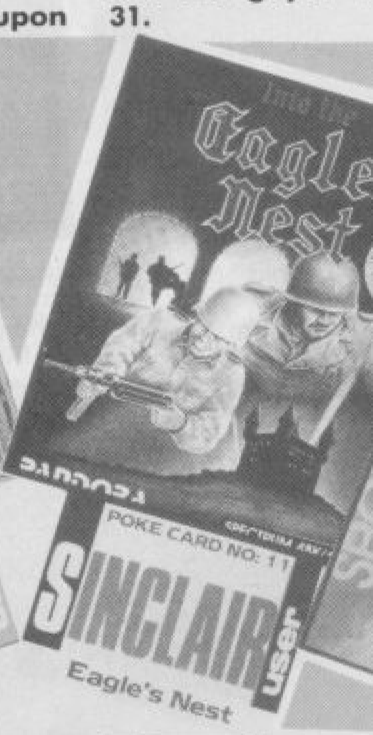
Sure?

Yes. That's all? Well OK, if we run out of one card then you can't have it. But we probably won't. (But don't hang around with your orders). If we do we'll give you something else.

Is there a closing date on this one guys? Yep, July 31.

Card 1	Head Over Heels	Invincibility
Card 2	Enduro Racer	Infinite time
Card 3	Sigma 7	Infinite lives
Card 4	Butch Hard Guy	Infinite lives
Card 5	Speed King II	Pass through riders
Card 6	Shockway Rider	Infinite lives
Card 7	Nether Earth	Infinite supplies
Card 8	Knuckle Dusters	Infinite lives
Card 9	Gauntlet	Infinite energy
Card 10	Jail Break	Invincibility
Card 11	Into The Eagle's Nest	Infinite keys/ amunition
Card 12	Short Circuit Part 2	Invincibility
Card 13	Star Raiders II	Infinite ammunition
Card 14	Bazooka Bill	Infinite lives
Card 15	Uridum	Allows you to tailor the game to your requirements
Card 16	Lightforce	Invincibility
Card 17	Amaurote	Infinite money/ bombs/energy
Card 18	Paperboy	Invincibility
Card 19		Infinite lives
Card 20	Martianoids	Invincibility
	Krackout	











★ Remember: You won't get your Pokes if you don't send us a stamped addressed envelope or if you don't stick Coupon 1 from past issue in the space provided.

1☐ 2☐ 3☐ 4☐ 5☐

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16☐ 17☐ 18☐ 19☐ 20☐

POKE CARDS 1 COUPON

ZYNAPS

Before you buy **Zynaps** you'd better invest in the toughest most responsive joystick you can find. 'Cause **Zynaps** is the best all-guns-blazing left-right-scrolling arcade game I've seen in ages.

Graphically you'll believe a Spectrum totally lacks attribute problems, you'll believe a Spectrum can shunt sixteen sprites and background around at 25 frames per second. And you'll believe a game can have sixteen varied and detailed levels with some of the largest sprites leaping around the screen.

Zynaps is by Dominic Robinson whose previous claim to fame is as converter of **Uridium** to the Spectrum, the game they said could not be converted.

Pretty good credentials. It even manages to incorporate a few original looking aliens.

Let's not spend too much time on the plot. For some reason, your battleship has a very good reason to zoom through assorted backgrounds from high-tech space city interiors through asteroid belts past craggy alien landscapes to peculiar floating bubbles and beyond.

For some reason you need to destroy anything that moves and a few things that don't and everybody is firing at you. For some reason when you destory a wave of aliens or obliterate a particular alien gun tower you get to pick up an energy diamond. And for some reason the more energy diamonds you have the more fire power you build from useless single-shot laser to multi-pulsing photon blasts plus bouncing bombs and guided missiles.

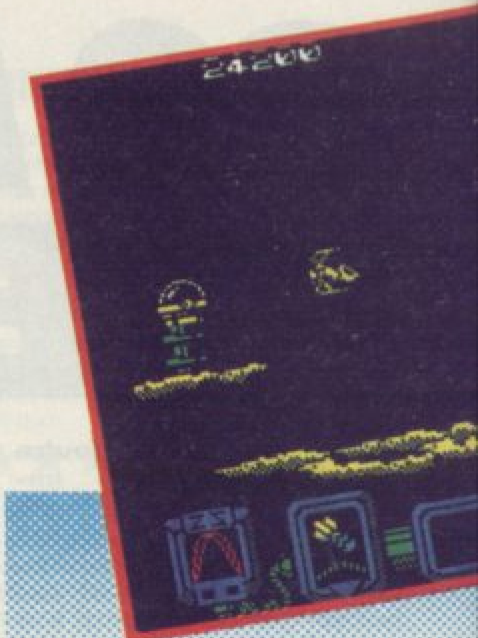
Having failed to do anything particularly spectacular with **Gunrunner,** Hewson seems to have spent some considerable time on the gameplay of **Zynaps.**

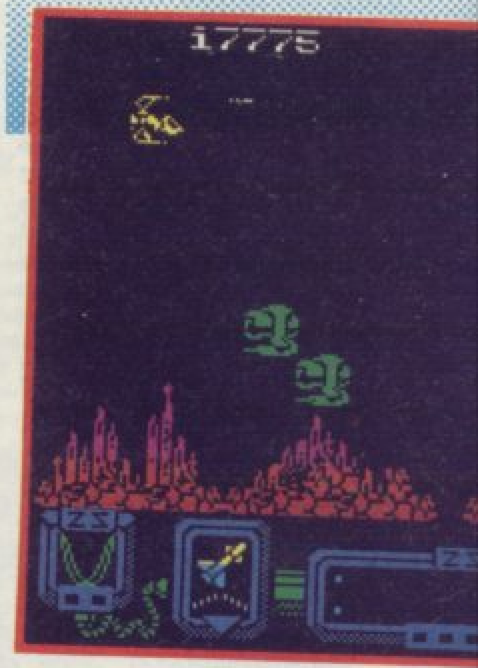
My God, the game is difficult. That is, it took me zillions of goes before I even managed to escape from the first level. This was mainly because of the very unpleasant gun emplacements which lob blob bombs at you. So unpleasant are they that the little bombs even get lobbed at your from behind (blighters). If you do manage to take out a gun emplacement however you are guaranteed of an energy diamond. Get on to those higher levels of firepower as quickly as possible...

There are sixteen levels but in any one play you only get a partly random (ie start levels are the same) selection of twelve. The graphics really are stunning, the kind of backgrounds you sometimes see in lesser games as static backgrounds but scrolling very smoothly. Colour have been arranged so that there is almost no evidence of colour clash

HINTS AND TIPS

- **It's vital to continuously change your lateral position on the screen – sometimes you need to be far left to wipe out as alien attack wave, sometimes you need to be far right to try and zoom past a gun emplacement before it gets a chance to shoot**
- **Aliens have distinct movement patterns, in particular some are 'gone' once you've flown past them others will fly backwards to come and get you**
- **Don't pass up any chance to get an energy orb unless absolutely vital – sometimes the screen gets so full of aliens you'll need to have acquired a lot of firepower**
- **Some aliens attack in straight lines – get in position fast enough and you may be able to wipe the lot out before they get airbourne**
- **Come up low over gun emplacements – they are usually in 'dips' in the first level and to stand any chance of taking them out you'll need to be able to dip down quickly■**





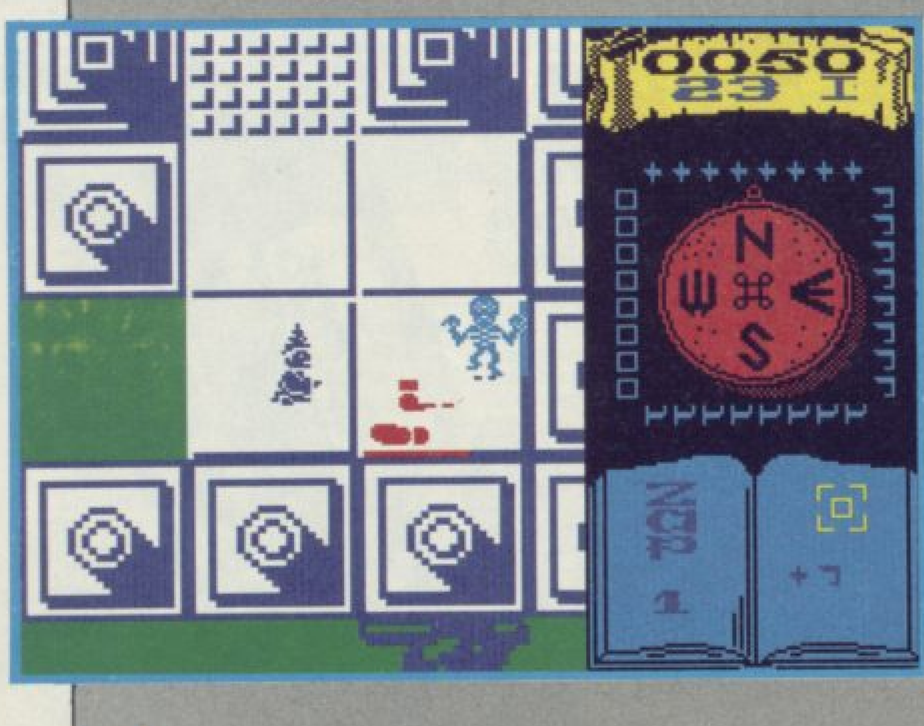
WIZ

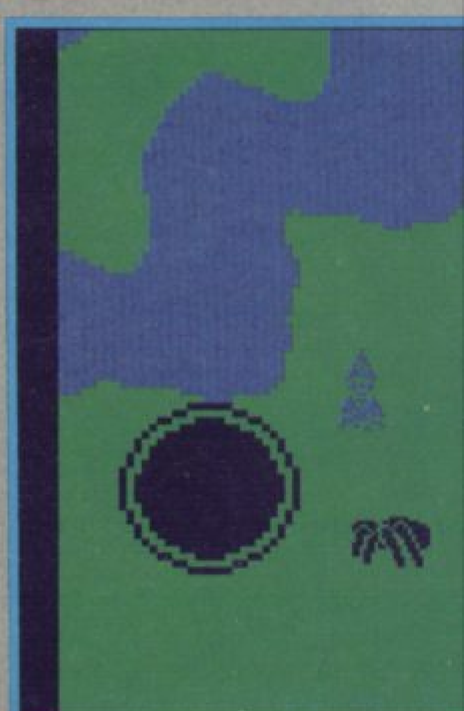
The blub to **Wiz** makes it sound like a remake to *Rebel Without A Cause.* You are a lowely 1st Level wizard a mere nothing compared to the Council of Wizards. Yet although there is Evil leaking through the abbys from the Dark Side, growing in strength all the time, do they do anything. Ha! No! Because they get half their power from the Dark Side, and if our world was cut off from it, they'd have to send their company cars and remote controlled videos back. So it's all up to you kid. Slick back that quiff and away you go.

This makes **Wiz** a game with a silly plot, which the company amateur psychologists hoped would appeal to "the kids". But luckily, there is enough decent game design to make it worth buying anyway.

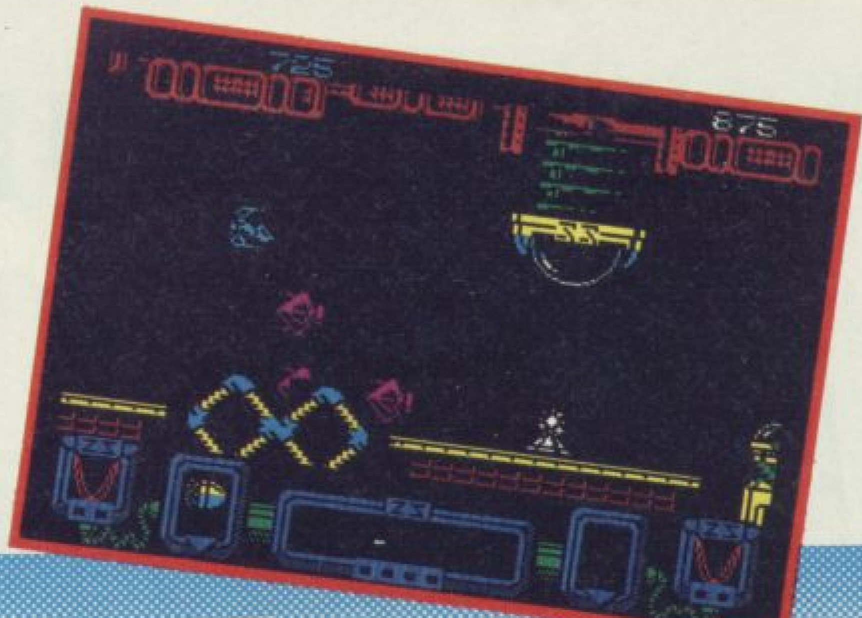
It might remind you a bit of **Feud** though.

You go through the five levels of the thing with the aim of cutting off the two Light and Dark worlds – the key to all this stuff is learning and using spells. Starting off with the three basic spells – Zap, Light and Force – as you go on, you meet Wizards who will be prepared to teach you others that will come in very useful along the way. These spells will









ARCADE REVIEW

FACTS BOX

Superb shoot-em-up with the fastest most detailed graphics anywhere. The game joysticks were designed for

ZYNAPS
Label: Hewson
Author: Dominic Robinson
Price: £7.75
Memory: 48K/128K
Joysticks: Various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★★
★★★★★





whatsoever.

Even the sound is better than OK including a particularly stomach churning 'neeeeeekk!' when you bite the dust. Again.

The weapons system gets pretty nifty, although the start laser is pathetic and your ship is slow accumulation of energy lets you hurtle across the screen and loose guided missiles which bounce around the screen under your control taking out dozens of aliens at a time. It's a bit like a round boomerang. When you get to the seriously large alien mothership you'll need it. It is, by the way, spectacularly wonderful and even animated.

That's about it really. This is the game your joystick was designed for■

cost you magical power to learn, however.

As well as that, casting any particular spell will cost you certain numbers of runes. There are four types of rune in the game, and you start off with eight of each. To cast a new spell, is not a simple business – particularly annoying if you are in a bit of a hurry.

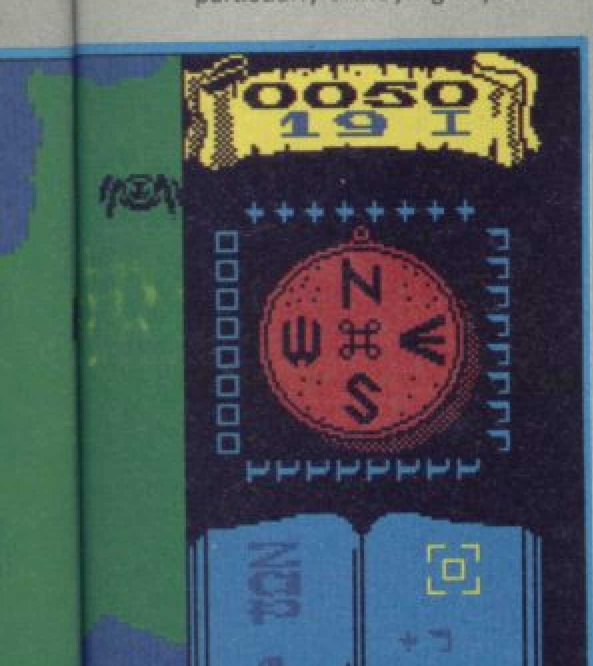
FACTS BOX

New approach from Redhawk authors results in neat mix of zapping and thinking. Magic stuff.

WIZ
Label: Melbourne House
Author: Silhouette Software
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: Various

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★☆
★★★★☆ 8



First, if you don't know the way the spell is cast, you must look it up in your spell book. (Enter Spell Book mode, and memorise the squence of runes). Now enter spell casting mode, and enter the correct runes in the correct sequence. If you got it right – you now have the appropriate power, if not... you lose the runes, and it's start all over again.

Extra trouble starts if you run out of one particular type of rune. To solve that particular problem, you have to search around for more runes and stuff.

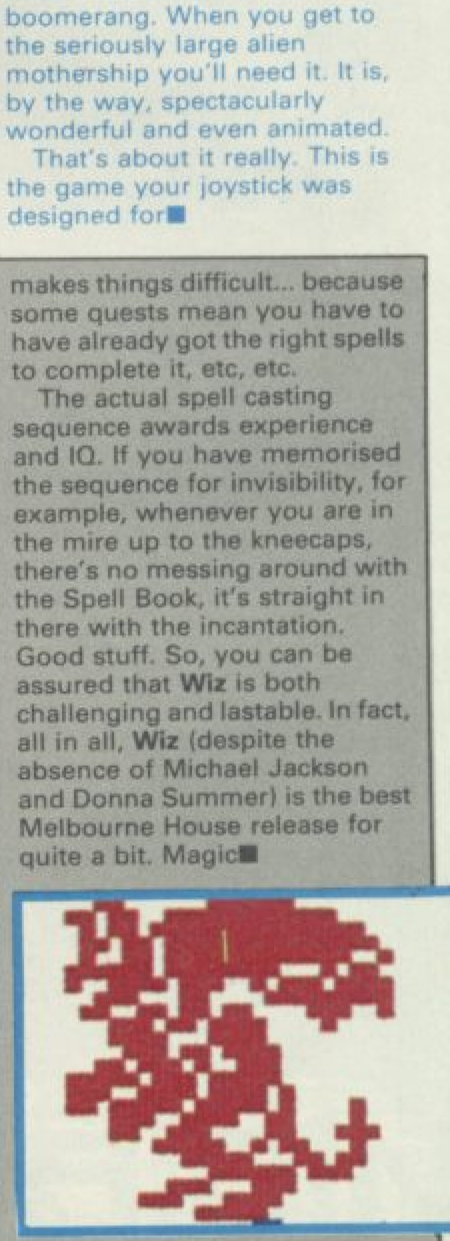
And so on until you save the world...

Fair enough, it doesn't sound the most original of plots, but the implementation and design are excellent. Written by the programming duo of Mike Lewis and Simon Price who brought you the creditable **Redhawk** and **Kwah**! (also from Melbourne House) land graphics are well designed and the gamesplay is a novel combination of brain strain and reactions.

There are problems to solve, spells to learn, runes to get, levels to advance and more. **Wiz** is a challenge that'll take you more than half an hour to crack.

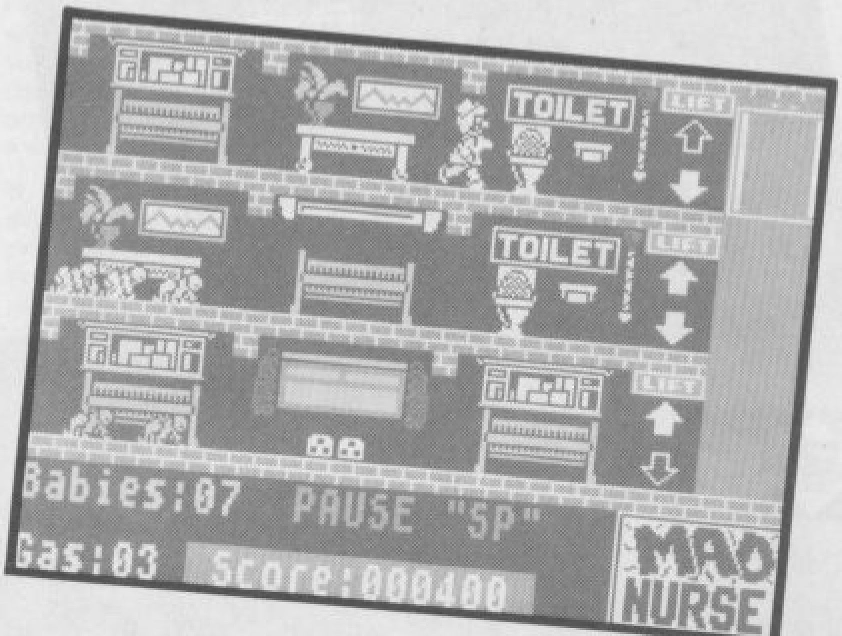
For instance, some spells cannot be brought straight off from the appropriate image. You find that you have to complete a quest... yuk. This makes things difficult... because some quests mean you have to have already got the right spells to complete it, etc, etc.

The actual spell casting sequence awards experience and IQ. If you have memorised the sequence for invisibility, for example, whenever you are in the mire up to the kneecaps, there's no messing around with the Spell Book, it's straight in there with the incantation. Good stuff. So, you can be assured that **Wiz** is both challenging and lastable. In fact, all in all, **Wiz** (despite the absence of Michael Jackson and Donna Summer) is the best Melbourne House release for quite a bit. Magic■



BUDGET
£1·99 £2·99
REVIEW

MAD NURSE



FACTS BOX

All about nurses maintaining law and order in a babies hospital ward. Apart from attribute clash its an entertaining little toddler

MAD NURSE
Label: Firebird
Price: £1.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various
Reviewer:

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★★
★★★☆☆ 7

If you look at this game in a highly critical manner and take it at first glance you could almost be forgiven for thinking that it is a complete and utter load of rubbish.

Mad Nurse however, is, a very whacky and entertaining little game.

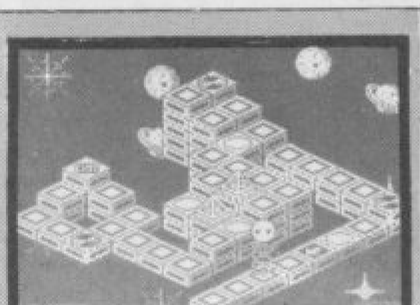
It reminds me somewhat of a hospitalised **Skool Daze** in its layout – with three levels, connected by lifts, of nursery wards, each with various cots, medicines, and electrical sockets.

The scenario has you as a trainee nurse in the baby wards, and it's you job to scour the wards for naughty babies who have climbed out of their cots and causing havoc wherever that go. As you move your nurse around (they have delightful names like Brenda Bumwasher and Tracey Toetickler) you find babies about to put their fingers in to plug sockets or opening medicine bottles, or intent on chucking themselves down the lift shaft.

You've got to overcome any powerful urge to just let them go ahead and write themselves off and build up your score by saving the tots, and returning them to their cots.

Get too many babies in one cot, and they all hop out again twice as fast! Collecting the bottles also gives you a bonus score, but you don't get much time for that.

It's all in extremely bad taste which is to say it's definitely a game to look out for■



The cosmic energy grid is a mean place. It's sort of square shaped, with lots of little squares inside, and getting across it is a difficult business, especially if you're a service droid with a defective bounce.

Parabola is a game with a lot of square things, some round

PARABOLA

things, and a thing that bounces up and down a lot. It's a really exciting game, as you can imagine. The action takes place on individual squares of the energy grid. Which are sub-divided into squares. Old Brucie has to bounce across this square, picking up some things and avoiding other things, thus reaching the exit and, you've guessed it the next square.

Anyway, all these squares aside, there are, as I said, some round buts as well, some of which are good, and some of which are bad. The good ones are the whirly things, which are energy discs, and Bruce has to collect all the discs on a square before he can leave. But watch out for the non-whirly ejector pads.

I'm terribly impressed by **Parabola**. Springy androids are all very well, and this is a springy android with at least some measure of cuteness about him. He bounces up and down nicely, his spring appears to bend in an authentic sort of way. He even makes twangs when he hits the ground.

Unless my copy of **Parabola** is strange and I'm totally misjudging it, **Parabola** is not really up to scratch. It's too hard to move about the grid, and the rewards are not worth the effort. OK, so the screen flashes lots of pretty colours at you when you get through a square, and you get some bonus points and there's lots of twangy sounds like lots of little Bruce's all jumping up and down in glee, but so what? Sorry Firebird, but this one's a dodo.

FACTS BOX

Boring bouncy thing and lots of squares. Not worth springing out of bed to go and buy it. (Joke, get it?)

PARABOLA
Label: Firebird
Price: £1.99
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

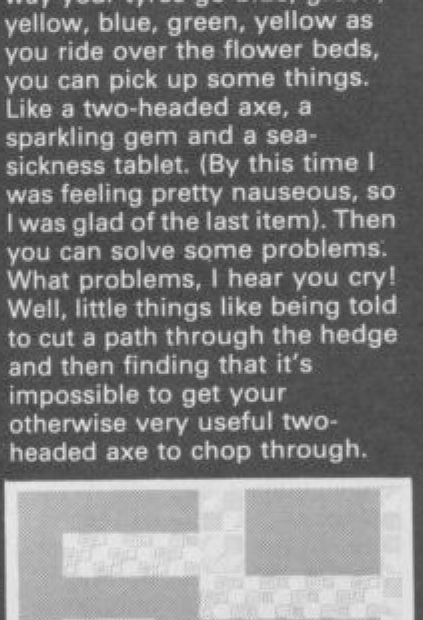
★★☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ 3

JACKLE & WIDE

Poor old Dr. Jackle. He's spent years researching the formula for the transforming potion, and now he ends up as a blob on a bicycle. Bad news Uh?

Jackle and Wide is a budget release from Bulldog, and that's about the best description I can give you. Sad to say, **Jackle and Wide** ain't much cop.

Part one of the game takes place in Hyde Park, which you cycle round on the trendy old Penny Farthing. (Hence the blob on the bicycle comment). Whilst cycling around, admiring the way your tyres go blue, green, yellow, blue, green, yellow as you ride over the flower beds, you can pick up some things. Like a two-headed axe, a sparkling gem and a sea-sickness tablet. (By this time I was feeling pretty nauseous, so I was glad of the last item). Then you can solve some problems. What problems, I hear you cry! Well, little things like being told to cut a path through the hedge and then finding that it's impossible to get your otherwise very useful two-headed axe to chop through.



FACTS BOX

Yet another walk about a bit and pick up things then solve the puzzles sort of game. But not one to rave about

JACKLE & WIDE
Label: Bulldog
Price: £1.99
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K
Reviewer:

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ 3

Once you've picked up some things, but not the only really useful looking thing, a key, which was stuck behind the invincible hedge, you can go to the Underground and poke around down there.

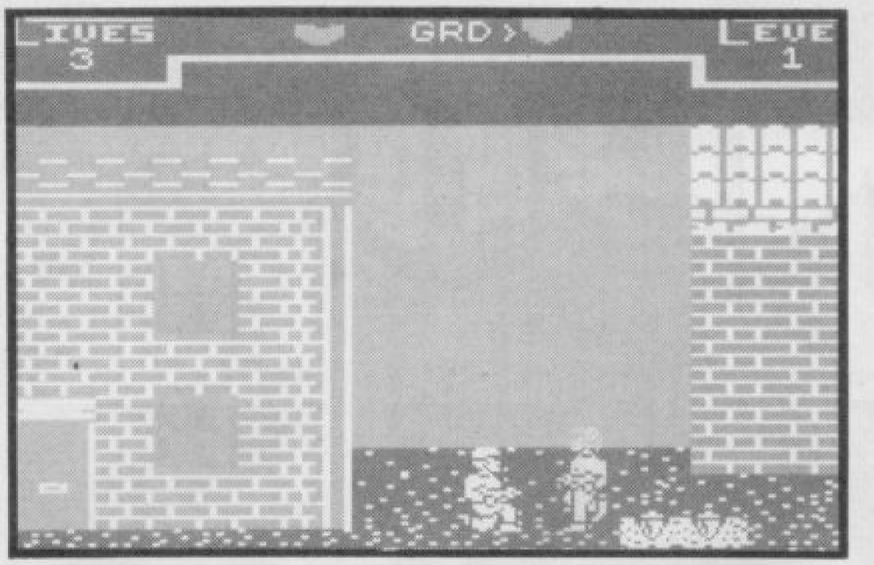
Well, down the sewers you'll find a number of nasties, all busy zapping your energy and trying to drown you in the ever-rising flood waters. You can run about in a few rooms, have your energy zapped a lot, and drop dead. Thrilling.

There's obviously a good game lurking in the *Jekyll and Hyde* story, but this one isn't it. **Jackle and Wide** is not a winner.



GUNRUNNER
GUNRUNNER
is the ultimate hero. Get your blood racing and save the planet to which only you have the key. Along the way you will need nerves of steel playing against a fast scrolling landscape. This is one of **Hewson's** most technically demanding games, needing a cool head and lightning reactions.
Available on
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Price £7.95 Cassette.
For Mail Order send a cheque/P.O. to Hewson Consultants Ltd. Order by Credit Card by sending your Access/Barclaycard number and enclose a specimen signature. Don't forget to enclose your name and address.
HEWSON
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As part of our continuing development of innovative software we are always happy to evaluate software sent to us with a view to publication.

ARCADE REVIEW



FACTS BOX

Cashing in on the heroes of the SAS does not produce a game to drool over. Runny-jumpy game – not a lot else

SAS STRIKE FORCE
Label: Mikro-Gen
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: Kempston/Sinclair

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★☆☆
★★☆☆☆ 5

SAS STRIKE FORCE

Trying desperately hard to look like Lewis Collins in *Who Dares Wins*, and failing for obvious reasons, I loaded SAS strike force into the ol' Speccy. And the loading screen was red.

Which seemed to me to indicate extreme violence and bloodshed. Which meant, I assumed, that this was a typical sort of game.

The scenario goes something like this. There are these terrorists who are threatening to change life as we know it, to destroy everything that we in this country hold dear.

So get in there and waste the afro hair-doed terrorists. All by yourself. Yes. The Strike Force being somewhat depleted, perhaps they're working to rule or something like that, it's up to you to do the job all by yourself. There are mines all over the place, and there are lots of terrorists and there are some Midland Bank griffins. No, no, sorry, they're the hostages, so I'm told. (But they look like Midland Bank Griffins. Honest).

Perhaps you'll have realised that the graphics are not brilliant. And because the screens flip rather than scroll, you never know what's around the corner, and it's all too easy to tread on a mine and get blown to Kingdom come because you just didn't see it.

Of course, this being your average Mikro-Gen sort of game, you'll know instantly that this is a game which also suffers from that horrible disease, the attribute problem. After a while, the sight of your hair turning from orange to magenta to something completely different gets rather depressing, and the temptation – to shut your eyes and fire gets rather great (You can actually kill a lot of things like that, but most of them tend to be hostages and trees and suchlike).

It's important to keep an eye on your ammunition as it tends to run out at the most inopportune moments. However, if you run over certain objects, you're ammunition will increase. You get extra points for keeping within the time limit, not using ammunition and wasting the terros.

Although **SAS Strike Force** could have been a very nice game, it doesn't quite make it. To take a fairly commonplace idea and turn it into a game that will enthrall players requires excellent graphics, soundtrack and the like. To marry an ordinary idea with ordinary programming is to produce a game that takes its place amongst the mediocre.■

HOWARD THE DUCK

Poor old Howard. He's a duck that very nearly turned into a dodo.

As a big budget movie – 30 million dollars or so – plus being based on a pretty zany cartoon character he must of seemed perfect material to be snapped up and turned into a computer game. So much so that Activision did. Maybe it thought it would be the next **Ghostbusters**.

And how wrong it turned out to be.

FACTS BOX

Moral: next time spend less money on the licence and more on the programming. Another lucky escape for Howard

HOWARD THE DUCK
Label: Activision
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various
Price: £9.99
Reviewer:

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★☆☆☆
★★☆☆☆ 4

First there was the fact that the film flopped in the US. Then, just as Activision as about to launch the game last year the film company changed the name of the movie. But the film still went on and flopped over here.

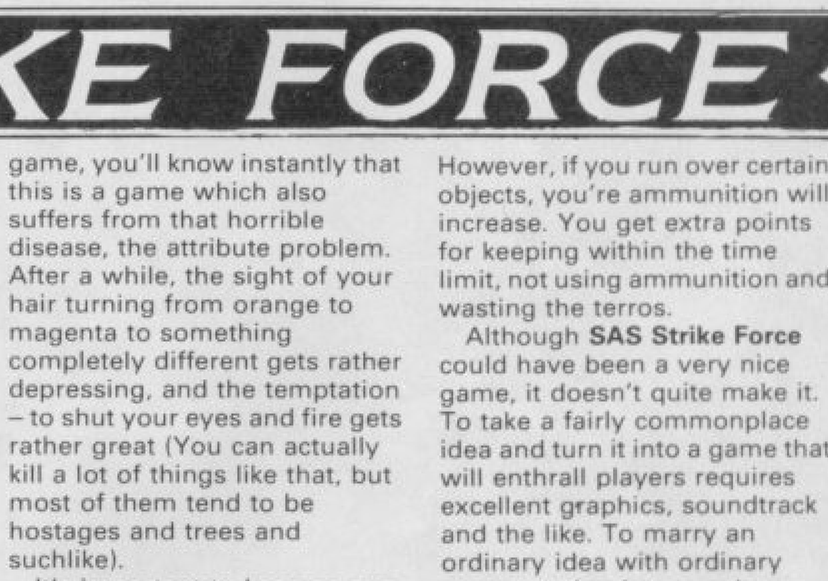
Then there were all the production delays and the C64 version of the game previewed in September written by Activision in the US looked pretty rough (and that's putting it mildly).

Now, six months and much baited breath later, here's the Spectrum version. Looking suspiciously like the C64 game.

The plot: someone's got to rescue Beverley and Phil (who they are is unclear), and that person is your duck.

To do so Howard has to fight his way across Volcano Island through mutant slime and fight off some pretty mean looking mutants.

Howard has a jet-pack to allow him to walk on water (I thought ducks could swim, am I right or what?) and a microlite aircraft to fly up into the volcano (ducks *can* fly can't they, I mean it's not just my imagination or anything like that). Oh, and a neutron-disintegrator (that one's fine by me). Thus equipped, the adventure starts.



Now **Howard the Duck** would make me very happy were it a budget game. But since it's not, I'm not.

The graphics are merely average, and Howard himself is the weirdest duck this side of Peking.

The gameplay is inclined to be a bit tricky until you've mastered the basics – like how to take a running jump and the art of Quack Fu – after which it becomes ridiculously easy.

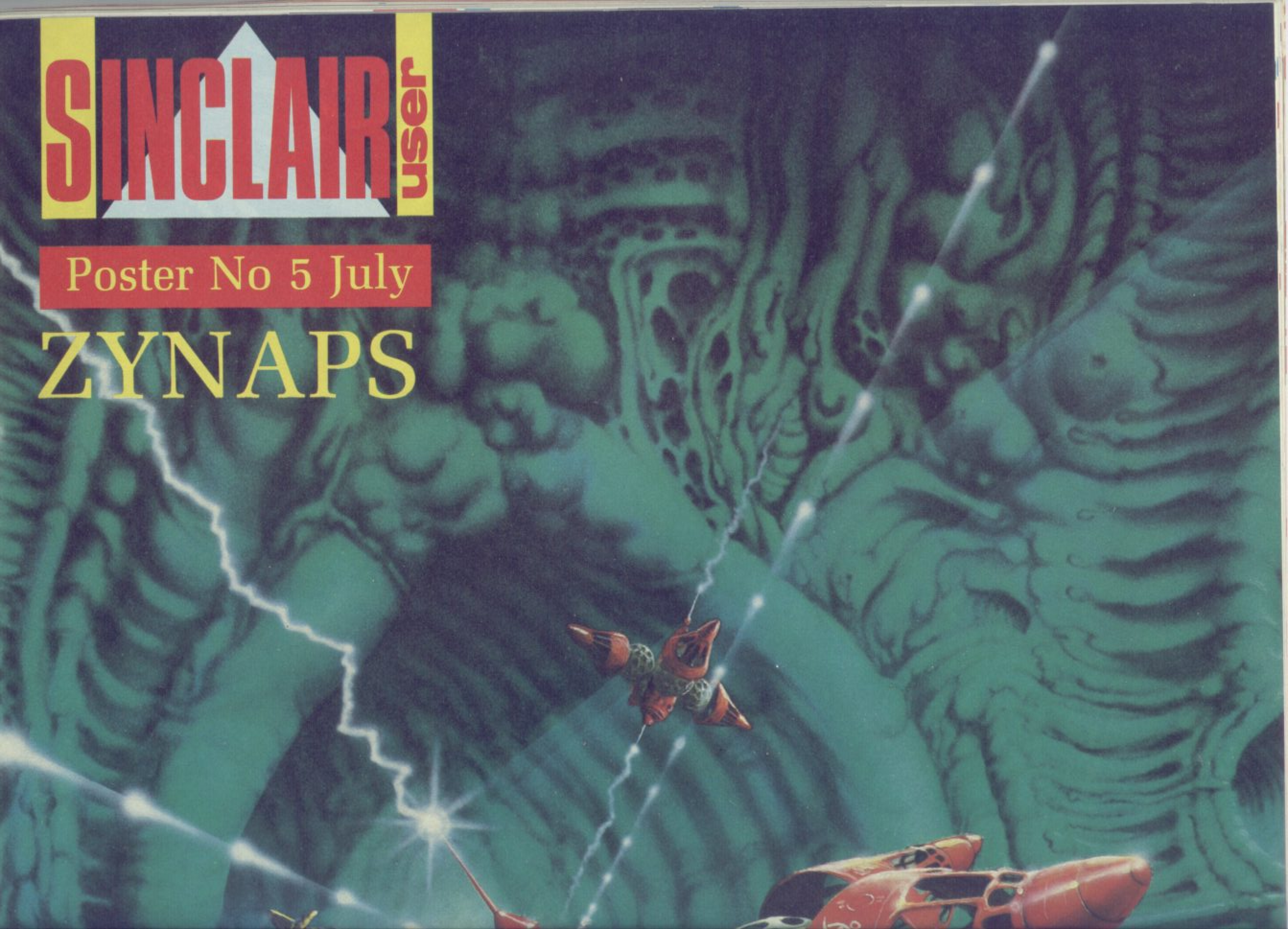
I found killing mutants was simply a matter of kicking the little critters until they disappeared, and never mind about the punching.

Apart from the fact it's not a very good game – which is I suppose a serious drawback – I rather liked **Howard the Duck**.

There's something rather appealing about kicking mutants to death, as all serious game players know.

Not quite a dodo but very nearly■


CATCH
23


SINCLAIR user
Poster No 5 July
ZYNAPS


"Superb shoot-em-up
with the fastest
most detailed graphics
anywhere. The game
joysticks were designed for"


OF GAMES
MARIO BROS
MUTANTS
NOW AVAILABLE FOR YOUR SPECTRUM and AMSTRAD
Now hot from the arcades comes Nintendo's Mario Bros for your home computers featuring Fireballs, Sidestepper, Fighterfly and of course – Mario and Luigi! Flip those pests and kick 'em off the pipes, but don't lose your footing on those slippery floors. Play as a team or against each other; either way you're in for a scream with Mario and Luigi – the **MARIO BROS.**
I took on the Mutants knowing I was armed to the teeth with missiles, mines, torpedoes and more . . . I could even choose where I wanted to fight! How could I lose? . . . How DID I lose? I've never seen anything like it . . . they came at me in droves, in swirling gases, in forms spinning a deadly gossamer and there were more to come. I know now that one form of Mutant will never escape a well planned pattern of mines. It's just the beginning . . . but I must build the ultimate weapon or I'll NEVER be rid of them all! **"An essential purchase – miss it and you're missing something special" – Zzap**
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ÖUTL

PLAY BY MAIL

Play by mail is not dull. It is exciting, sometimes, indeed, it is at least as exciting as Gauntlet **or** Rambo. **Although the idea of PBM was derived from postal chess, the general concept now takes in** D & D, **fantasy, Science Fiction (try** Shattered World**), Gang Warfare (**It's a Crime**) and even Troll humour (**Troll's Bottom**).**

There are around 32 companies running various PBM systems sometimes moderating a thousand or more players- some of them are brilliant and suitable for movices others are dull and suitable for nobody. We given you the run down of a few of our favourites below. At their best RPG's are fantasy on a massive scale, a marvellous escapist challenge carried out with the aid of your very own postman. You may even make some friends, since some systems involve direct contact with other players.

It costs of course, usually a start up amount to get you a rule booke and stuff and then some amount per turn – it's rarely very expensive however and you should be able to find systems that cost under a pound to begin.
Some examples:

It's a Crime

You play a gang leader trying to wipe out 499 other gangs and become the Godfather of New York. This one is moderated by computer and it usually takes a week for each turn to be processed. It works by you choosing, at each turn, from a list of actions you can command your gang to perform. *It's a Crime* is cheap – start up is Free! and each turn cost 62.5 pence (although you can buy turns in blocks.) One point – there are a few controversial aspects to the plot including dealing in drugs and extortion – maybe thats a problem. Contact: KJC Games, PO Box 11, Clevelys, Blackpool, Lancs FY5 2UL.

Shattered World **is a Science Fiction game. It's imaginative and suitable for beginners. In the game you control a team of vehicles mining a planet and scouting for information. You fly a giant pyramid called Tetralith.**

Shattered World **is computer moderated but has some very useful game masters only a phone call away. A special offer start up price for SU readers of £3.50 (instead of £5) includes rulebook, map and two free turns – later turns cost £1.50 including postage both ways. Contact: Jade Games, Freepost, PO Box 54, Southsea, Hants PO4 0NA.**

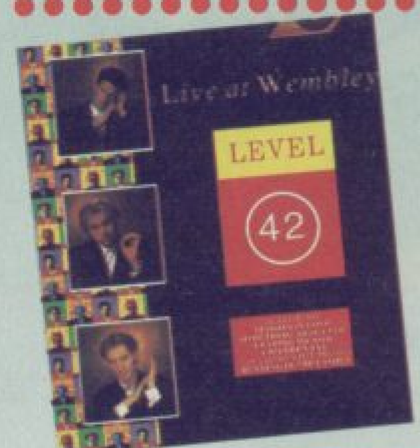
LASER WAR!

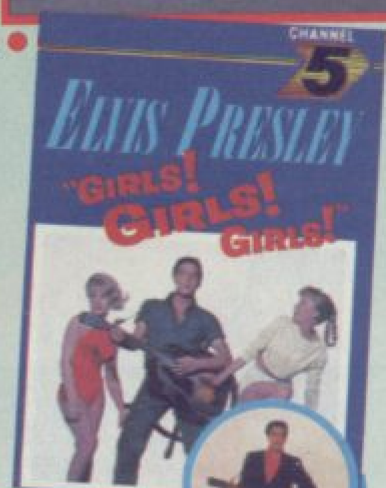
Flash Gordon move over! Now you can own you very own "laser gun" and enjoy vaporising your friends.

At least three "laser' game systems are now being imported from the States. All operate on the same principle; a pistol produces an infra-red light beam, which is picked up by a sensor mounted on a target attached to your opponent's body. Matell's LASER TAG system features the terrific-looking starlyte gun and a strap-on sensor for around £40. A game handbook available separately suggests various playing options; the more competitors, the more fun.

Entertech's PHOTON has the sensors built into the guns, so you actually shoot at your opponent's weapon rather than his body; seems a bit odd, but for £59.99 you get two guns, two ID badges, and a sensor target for practice. Single gun kits cost £34.99, while the giant package of two







The Top Ten Hot Vids for Hip Kids!

1 Crusade *The Mission* Channel 5 *£9.99*
2 Invisible Silence *Art Of Noise* Polygram *£14.95*
3 CCCP *UB40* Virgin *£9.99*
4 Infected *The The* CBS/Fox *£14.95*
5 Value of Entertainment *Propaganda/ZTT* Virgin *£14.95*
6 Sex Bomb Boogie *Sigue Sigue Sputnik* Picture Music *£4.99*
7 P----- F--- D---- *New Order* Factory *£19.95*
8 Live at Wembley *Level 42* Channel 5 *£9.95*
9 Video Collection 77-82 *Stranglers* Picture Music *£9.99*
10 The Whole Story *Kate Bush* Picture Story *£14.95*

The Bottom Ten – Terrible Titles for Total Tackheads!

1 Greatest Hits *David Cassidy* Starblend *£6.99*
2 A Great Night In With. . . *Chas 'N' Dave* Channel 5 *£9.99*
3 Singalongamax *Max Bygraves* Video Collection *£6.99*
4 Liberace Live (shurely shome mistake?) *Liberace* Vestron *£9.99*
5 Video Collection *Cliff Richard* Picture Music *£9.99*
6 Shakey's Video Show *Shakin Stevens* CBS/Fox *£9.99*
7 In Concert *Richard Clayderman* Channel 5 *£9.99*
8 Video EP *Kajagoogoo* Video Music *£6.99*
9 Girls, Girls, Girls *Elvis Presley* Channel 5 *£9.99*
10 The Final Wham *Wham!* CBS/Fox *£7.99*

All titles available from Virgin and other large video dealers: compiled totally impartially by Chris "Videodrome" Jenkins

LANDS

guns, two sensor helmets, and two strap-on sensors costs £99.99.



Lastly, Buddy L's PHASOR FORCE outfit, at £39.99, includes a rather naffly-designed gun, sensor headband, bodybelt and ID card. The bodybelt has sensors at the rear as well as the front, so you can gun down the baddies (or goodies) from behind too. Also available is a phasor rifle and body sensor at £29.99.

All three systems claim to work at a range of up to 50 feet indoors, 25 feet outdoors. A lot depends on light conditions, but at least all three systems will make plenty of flashing and bleeping.

All three are being stocked by Beatties and other large toy stores. Cheaper Hong Kong copies are rumoured to be on the way, so this Summer the streets will probably be filled with the sounds of electronic gunfire and the howls of kids being exterminated...

CHRIS JENKINS

JULY COIN-OP OF THE MONTH



Bionic Commandos from Capcom is an addictive cartoon style game featuring as main talking point a bionic arm which can be extended like a rope to get you out of the tightest spots.

The plot is fairly simple – all you do is penetrate the enemy's HQ and run off with the secret plans of their next attack on your army. The only problem is that the enemy HQ can only be reached by climbing trees, scaling cliffs and then venturing into a fortress riddles with traps. This is where the old bionic limb comes in.

Bionic Commandos is a platform game of sorts, and your job is to climb steadily upwards using the extendable arm to climb onto higher levels so that you can then climb up it. It's also very useful for grabbing extra ammo when it floats down on parachute, but out of a real arm's reach! And then if you come across any enemy soldiers you can always extend your arm to give them a long range punch. Very satisfactory, especially when they fall off a platform or out of a tree and crash to their deaths far below.

Once you've managed to grab a laser cannon from out of the sky your job becomes even easier. However, life is still full of hazards, and these mainly come from the dozens of hornet's nests in early levels and horned orchids growing from the branches of the trees. Land on the horns and you're dead, get stung and you're dead. Try to knock out the hornet's nests before these irate buzzing insects appear. On later levels, you'll have to cope with flying hazards, enemy firepower, and platforms which aren't as stable as they seem. Crawl out on one of these and you're likely to plunge to your death, unless that is, you're particularly quick and can shoot out your arm and grab onto some ledge or branch above you.

Lots of action and a very entertaining scenario makes Bionic Commandos a winner. Instant decisions will be needed in this very addictive and well planned out game.

CLAIRE EDGELEY

ALTON TOWERS

Spend a day at the fair and what have you got? Some fast rides, watery hot dogs loud music, a fluffy toy (maybe) and an empty pocket that was once full of 50 p's.

Spend a day at Alton Towers and you get the benefit of sampling some of the newest rides in Europe, driven by the latest in computer controlled technology. Not only that, but for a once only entrance fee you can go on them as many times as you like. Alton has recently opened for the 87 season, and has unveiled its latest ride. Costing over £6 million the Skyride is one of the most sophisticated cable car systems ever devised. The whole thing is computer controlled, monitoring the number of cars moving at the same time, checking and rechecking safety mechanisms and even keeping tabls on the amount of wear each car takes. There is a human controller of course, but he just sits at his desk, watching these pretty coloured lights dance about his circuit board.

Take another ride, the water rapids, although this has been ingeniously designed to allow the boats to trundly along the lengthy river canyon under water power only, it is software that monitors each pump for the right water speed and direction, and works the hydraulic embark/disembark revolving stage system.

Can you guess what it is like to drop like a stone from 60ft in pitch black darkness? Well sample the Black Hole and that's what you get, it is in fact a roller coaster that is housed inside a building with no light whatsoever. Not recommended on a full stomach, but highly recommended if you like the white knuckle stuff. And, you guessed it, completely computer controlled.

There is one ride that has nothing to do with computers, just centrifugal force. The corkscrew, an upside down roller coaster that turns you inside out at the speed of a rocket. No latest technology here just good old fashioned science.

Alton Towers is the new face of theme park entertainment, combining all the thrills of the fun fair in spotless surroundings. And with the news that they are about to build a similar site at Battersea Power station, comes a feeling that that old travelling fair just won't seem quite the same again.

Details: 0538 702200

TOP TEN COIN OPS/JULY

1	Out Run	Sega
2	Flying Shark	Taito
3	World Wars	SNK
4	Rastan Saga	Taito
5	Spy Hunter II	Bally/Midway
6	Road Blaster	Atari
7	Rolling Thunder	Atari
8	Kick and Run	Taito
9	Combat School	Konami
10	Exerciser	Jaleco

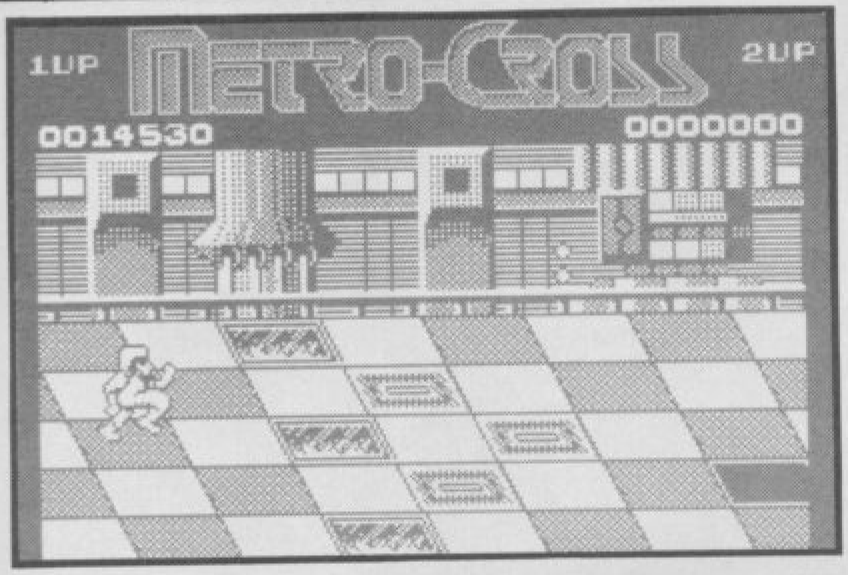
This list is compiled with the help of one arcade in London's West End, and is not necessarily the case country-wide. Thanks to John Stergides of Electrocoin.




lėvī'athan (lĭvəi·ăþăn). ME.
[a. L. (Vulg.), a. Heb. *livyāthān*. Ult. origin unkn.]
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ARCADE REVIEW

METROCROSS





I tried very hard indeed to like **Metrocross.** In theory it sounds like a cracking effort and the shots (of the arcade version) on the back of the box promise all manner of wonderful excitement – don't they always?

Licenced from the Namco arcade game of the same name, **Metrocross** involves racing along from the left-hand part of the play area to the right in a style not entirely a million miles away from the ill-fated **Inspector Gadget** (see last ish) while avoiding assorted obstacles such as potholes and pressure pads.

Everything (apart from the back wall, which doesn't count anyway, as it has no purpose) is black and white, which makes reading the instructions a little confusing eg: Blue cans – kick them and you score points/ Green Cans – Speed cans which double your speed.

Each of the twenty-four levels has a time limit which, when exceeded, will cause your fairly poorly defined character to be electrocuted on the spot. Each level also offers a different arrangement of obstacles, although there are relatively few types of obstacle. There's the "green tile" (which is in fact black) which will slow you down by 75% and the hurdle which you must leap. There are also numerous rats which scurry about and will gnaw away at your ankles if you don't kick them away. At sporadic intervals along the course you'll encounter "blue cans" (white) which can be kicked off the screen for bonus points.

There's a skateboard, too, which while offering moderate novelty interest as you glide over the ground, arms waving oddly at your sides, doesn't do a whole of the game in the last interesting stakes.

The main problem with **Metrocross** is that it just isn't particularly exciting. It's far too easy in the early stages (no-one should be able to score upwards of 50,000 in their first game on anything) and by the time it actually gets difficult to complete a level, you'll have been playing it for so long that it will be quite a relief to be able to stop for a while.■

FACTS BOX

Initially entertaining but utlimately unsatisfying licence. To be avoided if you've got anything along the same lines

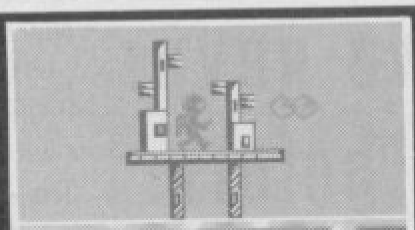
METROCROSS
Label: US Gold
Author: In-house
Price: £8.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick- various

Reviewer: [signature]

★★★☆☆ ★★☆☆☆ **5**

FALCON THE RENEGADE LORD

It's nice to know that MI6 aren't the only people to have hassle with their positive vetting. You see, T.I.M.E. (Temporal Investigative and Monitoring Executive) have got a renegade Time Lord on their hands – and not only does that mean shorter lunch hours, but the disruption of the whole Space-Time continuum. Bad



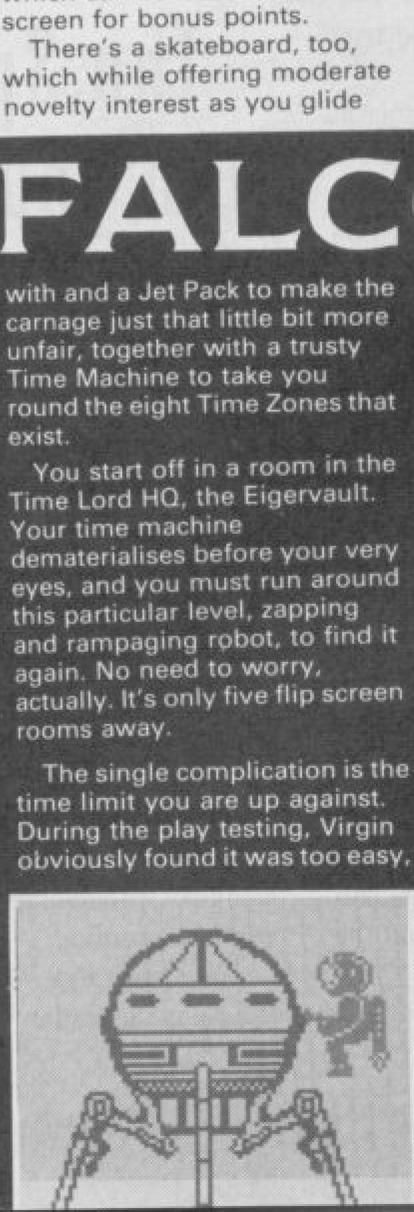
news, John. Good guys to the rescue.

Actually, what is happening is that this impish Time Lord is taking artefacts from one Time Zone and putting them elsewhere, which natch, could cause big problems. I mean, imagine King Harold and William the Conquerer having telephones. They could have called the whole thing off at half time, and then where would we be. David Steele as Prime Minister I expect.

Anyway, back at Falcon, it is your sworn duty to seek out these anomilies and set history to rights by returning them to their correct Time Zones. Lucky you have a rapid response laser gun to blow away any natives with and a Jet Pack to make the carnage just that little bit more unfair, together with a trusty Time Machine to take you round the eight Time Zones that exist.

You start off in a room in the Time Lord HQ, the Eigervault. Your time machine dematerialises before your very eyes, and you must run around this particular level, zapping and rampaging robot, to find it again. No need to worry, actually. It's only five flip screen rooms away.

The single complication is the time limit you are up against. During the play testing, Virgin obviously found it was too easy, and the only thing they could do at that late stage was to alter the time.



Playing real-time, you have only four minutes. Sure, you get some extra time when you complete a mission, but it still makes it a push. Some might think this challenging. I suspect the more discerning reader would simply find it annoying.

Falcon isn't complicated enough to make it as an arcade adventure. The zapping isn't compulsive enough to make it a decent zapper. The design isn't pretty enough to make it worth just looking at on the telly. In fact **Falcon** falls bewteen almost every stool imaginable.

Being not-completely-awful, it's possible that a much small relative might find **Falcon** of interest. It's certainly easy enough. But for the hardened gamer, there is nothing here whatsoever■

FACTS BOX

Simplistic shooter that has arcade adventure pretentions, but this is one Virgin product that never takes off.

FALCON: THE RENEGADE LORD
Label: Virgin
Author: Sentient Software
Price:
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: Various

Reviewer: [signature]

★★★☆☆ ★★☆☆☆ **5**

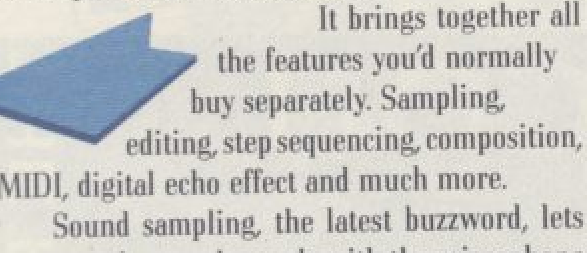


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For budding composers there's note, bar and tune editing. And for enthusiasts, a full MIDI specification that includes In/Out/Thru ports to connect with MIDI instruments.

Yet despite its power, the menu driven graphics and excellent manual allow sounds to be created and songs composed in minutes.

Sinclair User awarded it "the highest fun-per-pfennig rating of any Spectrum peripheral."

The price of all this magic? Just £49.95 complete with manual, microphone and demonstration recording.

ZX Computing Monthly's reviewer concluded: "I have no hesitation in giving it the highest accolade possible from a hard bitten, cynical reviewer. I will buy one."

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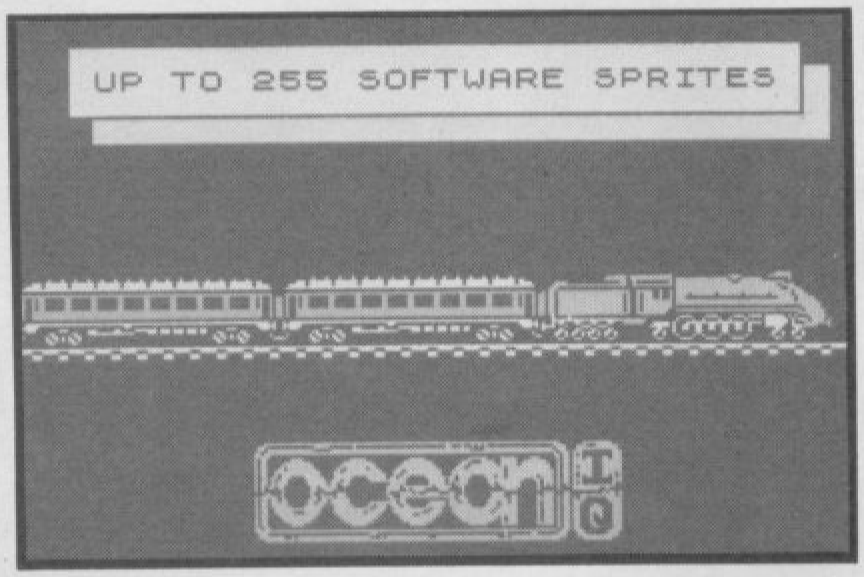
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FURTHER DESIGNS ON GAME PROGRAMS...
(GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE ELEMENTS)

Peter Johnson of Fife wants to be able to write games professionally but he doesn't know any machine code. He writes.

I'm thinking of getting a game designer like Ocean's Laser Basic. What are these programs like? Do any professional programmers use them? Could the final game be marketed without any problems with copyright? Are these designers really capable of doing a game of the Steven Turner standard? If I can't make it as a programmer I want to be a games designer. Is there a demand and how do I become a designer?



What a lot of questions Peter, let me try and sort these out. Ocean's Laser Basic is not a game designer program at all. It's a rather better version of Basic a bit like the Basic supplied with the Spectrum as part of the ROM. In other words it has commands like

LET I = 14
LET B = I*J

You will find it very hard to write a game with this kind of program. It's much more suited to doing programs which keep track of how much you spend of your pocket money or a program to keep all the telephone numers of your friends.

There are some games designers on the market like the Graphic Adventure Creator and the Quill. These can be great fun to use but of course they turn out games of a particular type ie: adventures. That is the problem of using somebody else's program to create a game. You are basically limited to what the other person's program can do.

It's a bit like the difference between a bicycle and a supermarket trolley. If you want to get yourself from your house to your friend's house two miles down the road and the sun is shining then a bicycle is a very quick and efficient way of doing it. You can jump on your bike and be there in about 10 minutes. If however you want to collect up lots of food from supermarket shelves then taking a bicycle in and trying to pile the food on top of the bicycle would be a waste of time. You'd be much better off with a supermarket trolley, because a supermarket trolley is designed to hold the food and bits and pieces. Of course the supermarket trolley would be no good for getting you from your house to your friend's house two miles down the road whether the sun was shining or not!

Bicycles and supermarket trolleys are just two ways of getting yourself and your bits and pieces around the place. There are other ways like cars, buses, trains, aeroplanes, prams, rollerskates, taxis, hitch-hiking, walking, running or crawling on your hands and knees. Each of these mechanisms is appropriate in certain circumstances.

In much the same way, different programs are appropriate for different situations. Unfortunately, when it comes to writing games there are so many different types that it is possible to produce a program which will enable you to write any sort of game. The Quill and the Graphics Adventure Creator work for a particular type of game, but they would be no good for boxing games or scrolling shoot-em-ups or platform games or arcade adventures or racing games or arcade adventures or. . .or. . .or. . .

The professionals all use an assembler to write their underlying code. Depending on the situation some now have so-called Link Editors which allow different chunks of code to be linked together from many different sources to go into the main game. They also use tools to create the graphics as individual units, or other tools to animate the graphics and other tools to create the right sound effects and the right music effects. So if you want to become a games programmer you will have to master all these different types of programs.

As to becoming a games designer then I'm afraid the best games designers all have an appreciation of the various different kinds of software tools that are available because they've used half a dozen or a dozen of them themselves.





Gauntlet music mystery

Who's a thicky then? A couple of months a go I repeated Patrick Downes's problem concerning the music in the arcade game Gauntlet. He wrote to tell me that after a couple of months of playing the game the music suddenly changed. This sounded so unlikely that I wrote a little note about it in this column asking if anyone could throw light on the subject. Well I'm pleased to say, that approximately 9,322,547 readers have written to me to point out what is going

HEWSON HELPLINE

on. The very first letter received on the subject was from Graham Roberts of South Wirral who writes.

Throw away the optrex, leave your hair alone and stop worrying about the Gauntlet sound problem printed in May's Sinclair User. There are both 48K and 128K versions of Gauntlet and the program detects which is which depending on which load routine you use from a 128K Spectrum he writes. **If you use the "tape loader" then it loads the 128K program and you get the nice music. If, however, you move the arrow pointer on the initial screen down to 48K Basic and use the Load "" command it will Load and Run as a 48K programme and you get the ordinary beep type music.**

Thank you Graham and thank you to everybody else. Completely obvious and as plain as the nose on my face now you've explained it. I think I shall award myself the Thicky of The Year prize and crawl away under a stone and hide. First of course, I shall send a copy of Rana Rama to Graham Roberts for beating everyone else to the postbox.

Therefore Peter, I'm afraid it's a very lond hard road you have to tread. But never mind; it's good fun using all these different kinds of programs and don't worry because everybody starts off the same way. If you think about it even the very best programmer in the world started off knowing absolutely nothing!

Bit Pattern	Decimal Number	Reflected Pattern	BitDecimal Number
00000000	0	00000000	0
00000001	1	10000000	128
00000010	2	01000000	64
00000011	3	11000000	192
00000100	4	00100000	32
00000101	5	10100000	160
00000110	6	01100000	96
00000111	7	11100000	224
00001000	8	00010000	16
00001001	9	10010000	144
00001010	10	01010000	80
00001011	11	11010000	208
00001100	12	00110000	48
00001101	12	10110000	176
00001110	14	01110000	112
00001111	15	11110000	240

Table 1. The first sixteen entries in a "look-up" table for mirroring UDG's from left to right. The entries in the table consist of the numbers 0,128,64,192 etc as shown in column 4 above.



UDG's upon reflection

The next question comes from Andrew Bizwell of Chessington. He asks

Can you outline a method for achieving the following hideously complex result, namely the mirroring of a graphic such as UDG.

Ho! Ho! Ho! Andrew, this is one of those problems which looks absolutely impossible until you see how it's done and then it's obvious. Let me first prepare the ground by revising a little of what we know about UDG's or User Defined Graphics.

Everyone will be familiar with the characters which make up the Spectrum Character Set. These consist of the letters of the alphabet, the numbers 0 to 9 and some punctuation marks and some odd bits and pieces such as a little c in a circle which makes up the copyright symbol. Each of these characters is made up on a 8 by 8 grid of "pixels". each pixel can appear in either the PAPER colour or the INK colour. When the Spectrum is first turned on the PAPER colour is white over the whole of the screen and the INK colour is black over the whole of the screen. Hence the characters appear as black characters on a white background.

The setting of each row of eight pixels is controlled by the setting of one byte in memory. A byte consists of eight bits and each bit controls the setting of one pixel. A bit can either be set to 0 or to 1 and so the corresponding pixel position either takes the paper colour or the ink colour. As a full character consists of eight rows of pixels so there are eight bytes of information to define each character.

A User Defined Graphic occupies the same 8 by 8 layout as the ordinary character set. Thus the setting of each of eight bits in 8 bytes of memory determines the layout of each User Defined Graphic. The first byte of the eight determines the form of the top line in the UDG, the second byte controls the second line in the UDG etc,

So what do we need to do if we want to mirror a UDG? Well if you think about it, if you want to reflect it from top to bottom then the thing you have to do is to transfer the information in byte number 1 to byte number 8 and visa versa, the information in byte number 2 to byte number 7 and visa versa, the information in byte number 3 to byte number 6 and visa versa and the information in byte number 4 to byte number 5 and visa versa. In this way the UDG will get turned upside down. For example if the UDG was originally an arrow pointing vertically upwards then after the transfer process it would be come an arrow pointing vertically downwards.

These sort of transfers are not particularly difficult to execute either in Basic or in machine code. Thus turning UDG's upside down is fairly straightforward.

Now what happens if you want to turn a UDG around so that it faces in the opposite direction? In other words what do you need to do to turn a rightward facing arrow into a leftward facing arrow. This time it is not a question of shifting bytes around but a question of moving bits around within each byte. The left most bit (bit number 7) has to be moved to the right most bit (bit number 0) and so forth. Unfortunately, there is no simple command either in basic or machine code which will do this kind of transfer for you. Unfortunately, it is usually this kind of mirroring that you want to do in a program. For example if you have a little man walking to the right you may wish to turn him round and make him walk to the left. It is much less likely that you will want to turn him upside-down and make him walk on his head!

Both basic and machine code interpret the contents of a byte as a whole number lying in the range from 0 – 255. Thus any particular bit pattern which leads to a corresponding pixel pattern on the screen has a corresponding decimal number associated with it. The trick is to use a look-up table to convert the decimal number into the equivalent decimal number when the pattern is mirrored. For example, if the first pixel in a row was set and the remaining 7 pixels were unset so that a dot appeared on the screen at the very left of the row the corresponding bit pattern would be

10000000

This is interpreted as the decimal number 128. When the pixel pattern is reflected from left to right the corresponding bit pattern is of course

00000001

This is interpreted as the decimal 1.

Similarly the bit pattern 00010000 which corresponds to the decimal number 32 when reflected from left to right becomes the bit pattern 00001000 which corresponds to the decimal number 16. You can imagine a look-up table consisting of 256 numbers which shows how you have to change the decimal numbers to correspond to mirroring the bit pattern from left to right. Obviously the 32nd entry in the table would hold number 16 because mirroring the bit pattern for 32 gives rise to the bit pattern for 16. Similarly the 128th entry in the table would be the number 1 because mirroring the bit pattern corresponding to the number 128 give a bit pattern corresponding to the number 1. All this may sound rather complicated but if you look at table 1 you will see the decimal numbers and bit patterns for the numbers 0 – 15. You should be able to follow the mechanism and extend the entire table right up to 255. Clever eh?

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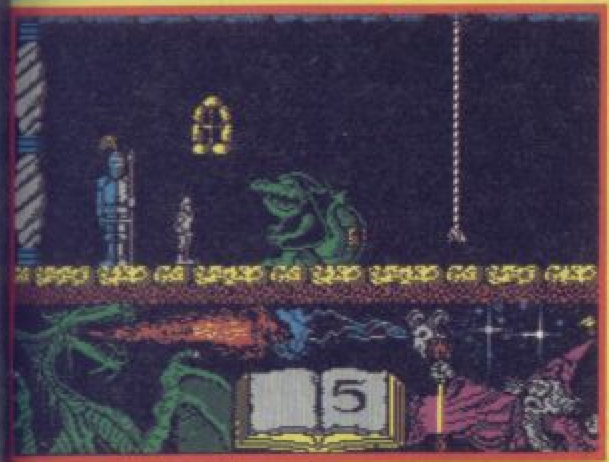
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▲ Nonamed



▲ Arquimedes



▲ Dustin

Who the hell is Dinamic?

Dinamic is just about the hottest software house in Spain – that country's equivalent of Ultimate (well almost). It has been releasing titles for several years now. Quite a few of which have turned up in one place or another in this country.

WHY HAS SU DEVOTED A WHOLE PAGE TO IT?

Because some of the recent games from the company are looking really hot and God knows there aren't many 'new' software houses around. Ocean has agreed to release a lot of Dimanic's product in the UK. The first of game released as part of this agreement is Army Moves which we like at lot (see SU June). There are also three games recently released in Spain by Dinamic which have yet to be licenced in the UK we thought you might like to hear about. We also thought you might like to know about some of the new Dinamic games Ocean will be releasing over the next few months.

WELL MAYBE IS THE STUFF ANY GOOD?

Could be very good, might even make it to very very good.

OK I'LL STICK WITH THIS PAGE FOR A WHILE, WHAT ARE THESE SPANISH GAMES UNRELEASED AS YET?

ARQUIMEDES XXXI

This is a pretty hot-looking text and graphics adventure. Hot because the graphics are excellent – beautifully detailed static backdrops which make some of the adventure stuff put out here look pretty silly. The plot involves destroying an enemy base before the bad guys take over the Universe (some things, like plot ideas, never change). Unfortunately being in Spanish the game is going to take a little while to convert but we think some enterprising software house should give it a go.

DUSTIN

A curious one this, not entirely unlike Short Circuit (by long stretch of the imagination.) You are trapped in a prison and have to get out. This involves strolling around various cells looking for useful objects, people, and some sort of exit. There are all kinds of wierd characters – not only the Security men but also a particularly cool dude smoking a cigarette. Who is he? What does he want? How can you get trousers like his? The sprites are large, and the graphic design is deeply stylish. Got to be worth a licence.

NONAMED

Prime Classic budget material. Looks not unlike Spellbound and has a sort of Sword and Sorcery type plot. Gameplay is, however, no compromise duck, leap and jump reaction stuff. Lots of screens of action in which birds, blue monster and rolling discs come hurtling your way. A bit runny jumpy but lots of fun.

ALRIGHT. SO THEY SOUND PRETTY GOOD. AM I LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO GET HOLD OF ANY NEW DYNAMIC STUFF OVER HERE?

You bet. Ocean have signed up four titles:

BASKET MASTER

This one looks very simular to some of the basketball stuff on the C64 at the moment. The best part of the program is the way you get a close-up action replay of the few seconds of play before each basket is scored. The graphics are brilliant, and you can play one-on-one or against the computer.

FREDDY HARDEST

Bit of a mystery this one. You are Freddy Hardest, space hero to top them all. Just about the only information we could get on this one is that you've got to work your way around an alien landscape. It's got very Ultimate-ish graphics and big, big sprites. The hero looks a bit of a wally.

GAME OVER

Another two-load affair this. You're an astronaut stuck in a hostile environment fighting to survive. Once you have collected enough weapons, you'll be allowed to go through to the second part of the game where you will find yourself beneath the surface of the planet. Here you'll have to negotiate the force-field barriers in order to work you way to the bad guy.

AFTER THE WAR

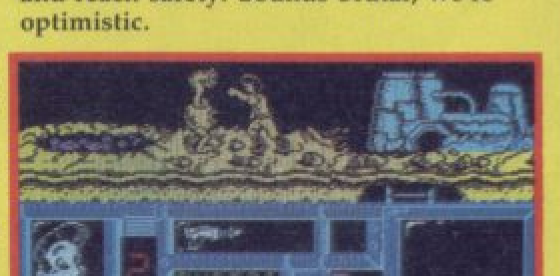
The nuclear threat comes home to roost. Earth is a mess, and you are once of the few survivors. Fighting your way through waves of mutant radiation victims, you have to try and reach safety. Sounds brutal, we're optimistic.



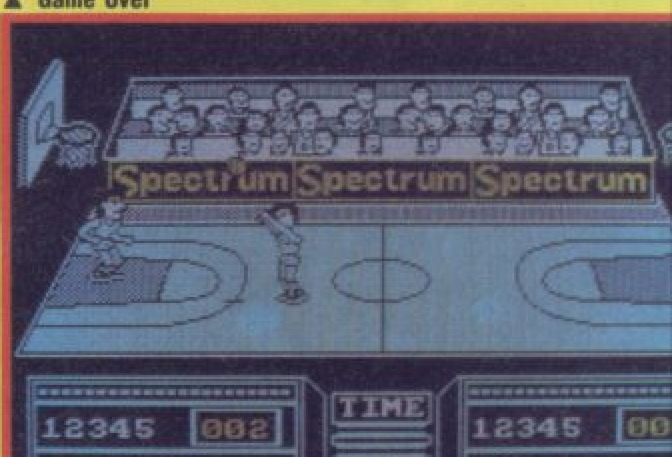
▲ After the War



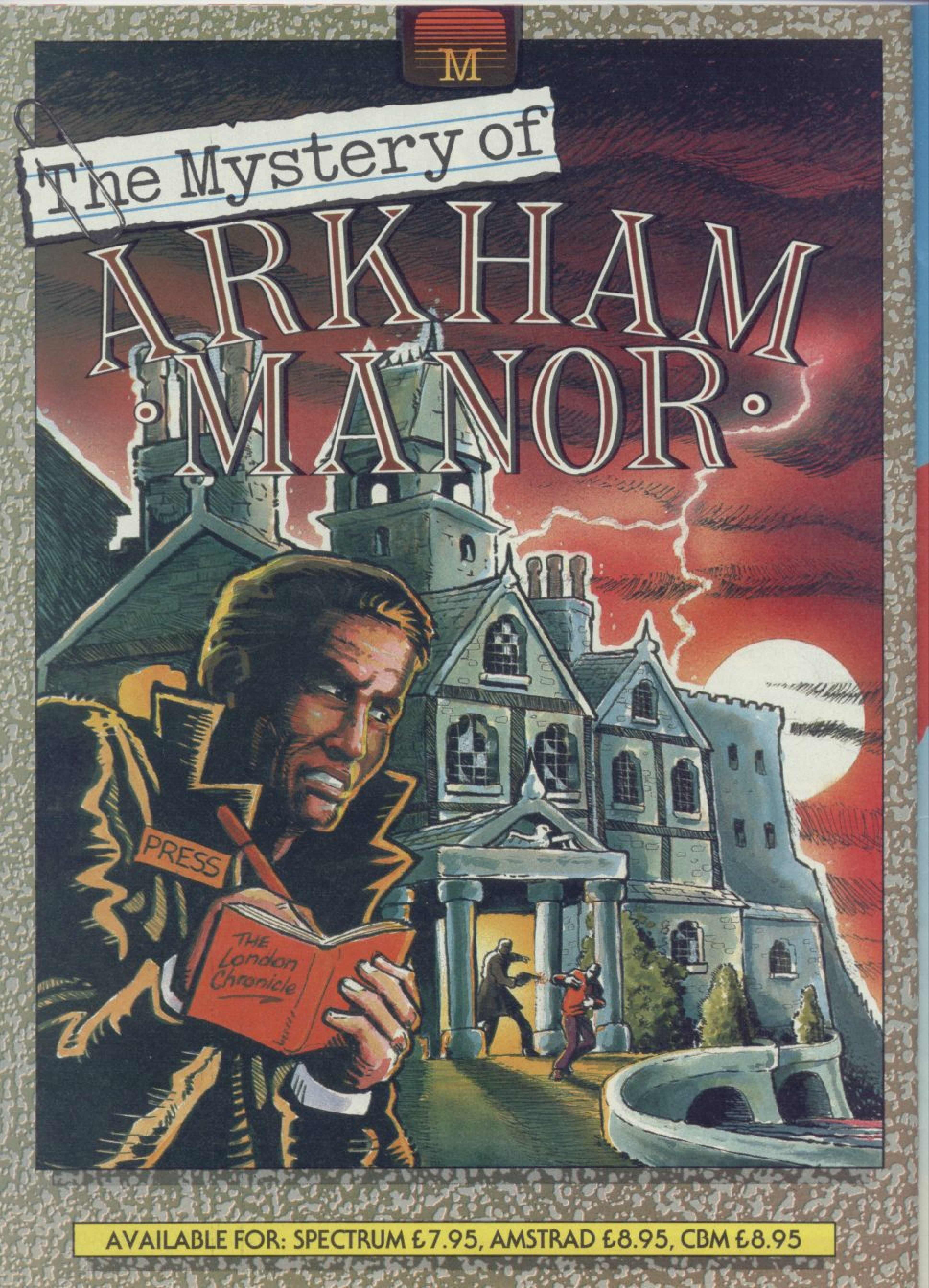
▲ Game Over

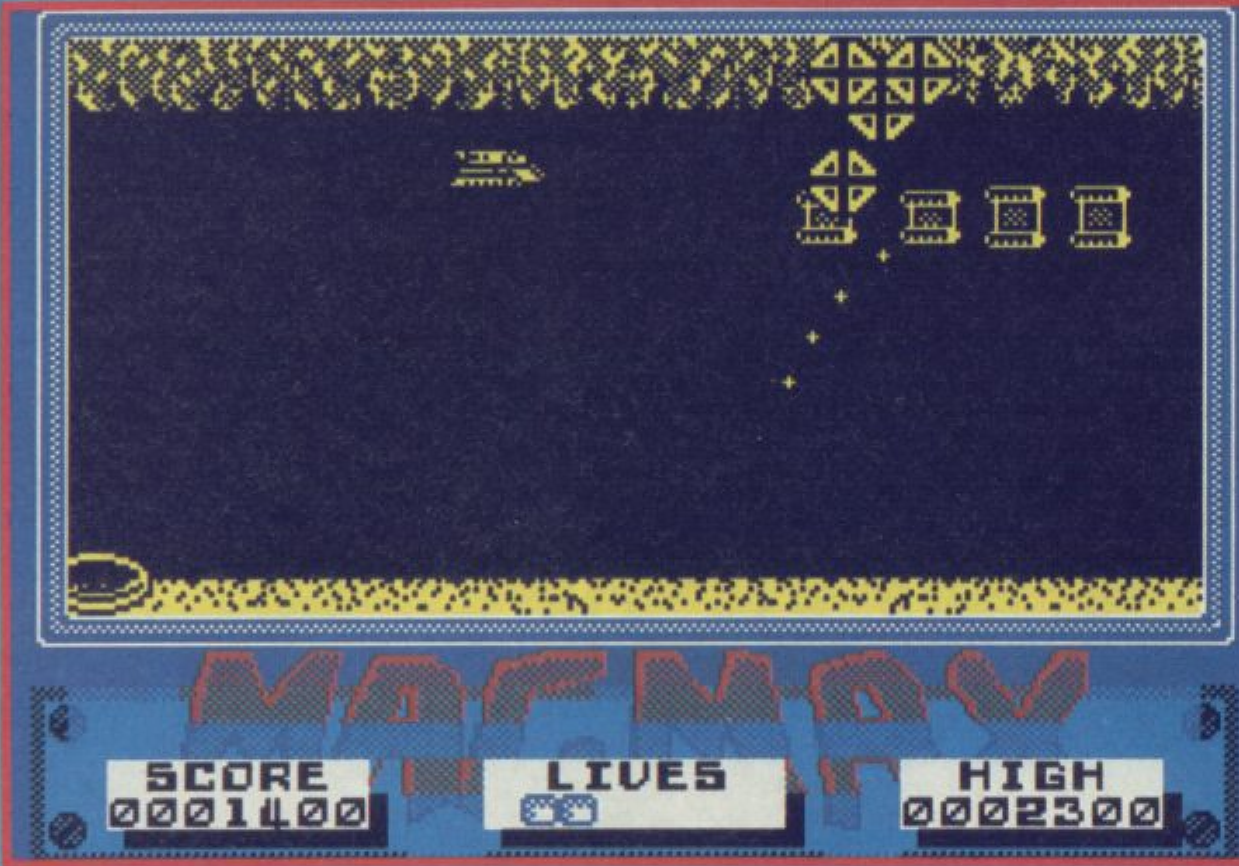


▲ Freddy Hardest



▲ Basket Master


M
The Mystery of
ARKHAM
MANOR
PRESS
THE London Chronicle
AVAILABLE FOR: SPECTRUM £7.95, AMSTRAD £8.95, CBM £8.95



MAG MAX

When one realises that the end of civilisation is at hand, and that there is no hope for survival, it makes sense to go down a hole and build a robot. It's not going to keep you alive, but you at least have the satisfaction of knowing that your 'droid is going to blast the hell out of the aliens after you've gone.

And that fellow star fighters, is basically the SP of **Mag Max** (Max being the droid in question). But there's more. Owing to sudden death, the mechanics didn't quite finish off poor old Max. So he's got no legs and no protective headgear. But never fear! It's quite easy to pick up these lettle necessities, once you've wasted a few of the enemy hordes.

But that's not easy. They're pretty mean as hordes go, they've got pointy heads and they walk around and fire at you. Doesn't do a lot for intergalactic peace really, but it does serve to make the game a bit more exciting.

And gosh, it's one exciting game. Some of the screens are green, and one or two of them are brown. Amazing. **Mag Max** is pretty enjoyable. Lots of opportunities to kill things, and progress on to higher levels, with some more things to kill. At first, as with all shoot-em-ups, it's quite tricky to get past the first row of aliens, but after a while, it's easy to suss out techniques to get you through.

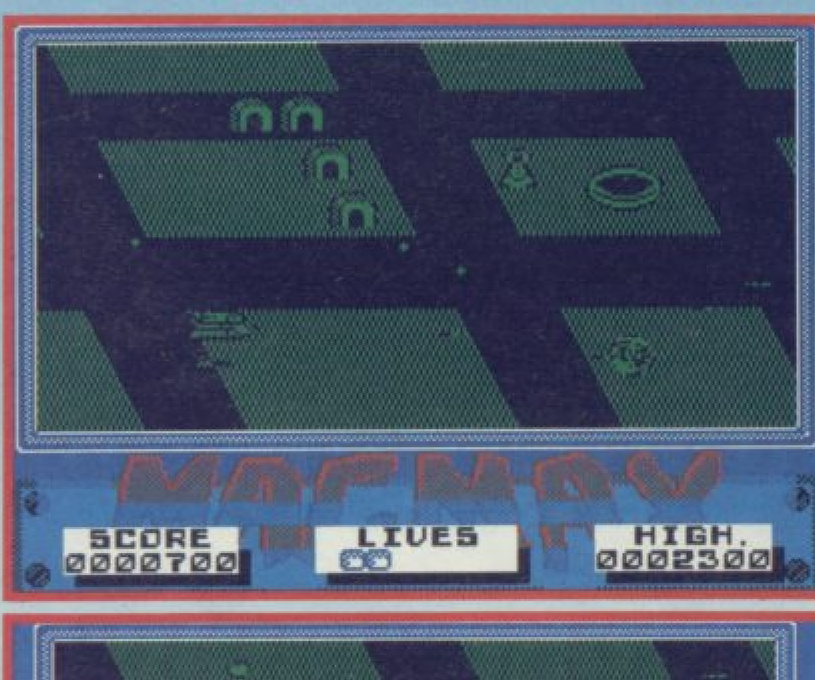
As you pick up various bits of your metallic anatomy, you gain more fire power, which makes life good for a laugh. This is extra important, because there are certain aliens which can only be destroyed by certain weapons, and if you come up against one without that particular piece of weaponry, you're scrap metal.

As games go, **Mag Max** is pretty good to look at. The graphics are large and clear and the scrolling is smooth. The only problem that I found was on the green screen. Seeing as everything else around you is green, including the background, apart from the black bits, which aren't green at all, it's quite difficult to spot the alien bullets coming for you, and sometimes you just find yourself dying, and you never even saw them coming. The satisfying part to dying, if dying can ever be said to be satisfactory, is that if you hammer the *Fire* button while you're doing it (dying that is) you can carry on shooting even when you're a celestial sort of robot. And that's good for a laugh.

At the end of each stage of the game, an excessively large and evil dragon appears, which has to be bombarded over and over again with various bits of ammunition, and then you can proceed to the next level and start all over again. If you should get bored with one particular screen, you can always duck down a hole and go on to a different underground passage. In that section the 3Dish view becomes side on. You still kill everything though.

So that's **Mag Max**.

Another actually quite good scrolling shoot-em up from Imagine■





FACTS BOX

Nice fast blast with a good variety of beasties to destroy. Well worth a look at if you're a shoot-em-up fan

MAG MAX
Label: Imagine
Author: Gary Knight
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ 7

COMPETITION

SINCLAIR User

NEMESIS THE WARLOCK



Walls. Funny old things aren't they? At times completely vital to out existance – where else to lean while waiting for one's "date" outside a restaurant when they are about fifteen minutes late and you have to endeavour to look "tuff" in order to avoid being given grief by any street urchins which may be loitering in the area? At other times, though, they can be a complete waste of space – getting in the way as you try and get from the kitchenette to the lounge while bearing a tray full of easily breakable glasses and crockery and not really looking where you are going.

Walls are just like people really (oh please – Ed) if you treat them right, they'll look after you. I mean, it's not especially surprising if the bedroom wall refuses to get out of the way when you're ligging around to a record of some description if it has been subjected to being adorned with a Bay City Rollers life-size-poster-pic for the past five years. Yus, walls have dress sense too. They know what they like to wear, and de rigeur this season – as any self-respecting bedroom wall will tell you – is CARTOON ARTWORK.

Being the sort of page that talks to walls a lot, Compo is proud to announce that in conjunction with Martech, we've got an original piece of Brian Talbot artwork from his Nemesis the Warlock strip in 2000AD comic. This sort of thing is seriously sort after and is a wonderfully unique original. Your wall will support you for the rest of your life.



Up For Grabs:

The winner of the first prize will get the piece of artwork plus a copy of the spiffing Nemesis the Warlock game from Martech and a v. trendy Nemesis T-Shirt.

A further 30 winners will receive T Shirts, and another 50 will get the game.

What to do:

Answer the question below and send it on the side of your house or postcard to: Oh For Heavens Sake What A Flimsy Theme For A Competition, Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Rd, Orton, Southgate, Peterborough, P62 0UF

The Questions:

Which of the following phrases is often found in the Nemesis comic strip?

A) Be Pure, Be Vigilant, Behave
B) Be Pure, Be Vigilant, Don't Rock The Boat
C) Be Pure, Be Vigilant, Be Serious
D) None of the above
E) All of the above
F) Must be this option, as none of the others seem credible.

NEMESIS ANSWERS:
A☐B☐C☐D☐E☐F☐
Name: ....
Address: ....
....

*No-one from EMAP or Martech or Termight can enter this one, so there.

roadrunner



Beep Beep! Roadrunner™ is in town and to celebrate the fact we have yet another astonishingly brilliant SU competition. This is your big chance to win a signed framed and completely wonderful print of Roadrunner and Wile E Coyote captured in typical poses complete with the all-important Acme truck in the background.

Runners-up get 25 copies of the game and there are even 25 posters for the people who run up to the runners up. If you see what we mean.

As usual, all you have to do is solve the outlandish problems presented below.



The Questions

1) What sort of animal is the Roadrunner?
a) Stoat
b) Bird
c) Marsupial

2) In what country did Roadrunner the cartoon originate?
a) France
b) Britain
c) America

3) Where did Coyote get most of his weapons from?
a) Argos
b) Asda
c) Acme

What to do

If you think you know the answer fill them in the boxes on the coupon below and send* them to SU Roadrunner competition, Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough P62 0QF. Closing date is July 25th.

ROADRUNNER ANSWERS
Name ....
Address ....
Answers (tick one)
1a☐b☐c☐
2a☐b☐c☐
3a☐b☐c☐

* Not open to EMAP or US Gold employees.

ARCADE REVIEW

QUARTET



When it was first released as a coin-op, **Quartet** was judged to be pretty revolutionary. It was a four-player game for a kick-off and it was one of the first non-sexist, non-racist, non-everything that you could possibly think of, games to come on to the market. And that made it rather interesting, and thus rather a good licence for some bright-eyed, bushy tailed software house to snap up. And that software house was Activision. (Cue fanfare.)

On the Spectrum it's a one or two-player game, but each can control two characters.

To set the scene. Owing to the general ineptitude and lack of brain power of those people living on the space colony, it's been over-run by alien pirate terrorists, – not the sort of aliens that you'd take home to meet your mother. So, it's up to the Quartet to save the colony from a lot of aggravation.

And this is where the 'non' bits come in. In the interests of liberation and free thinking, one member of the Quartet is a woman, and one of the men is black. (Not that you can actually tell the difference between them when they're up and running, one member of the Quartet in a spacesuit looks pretty much like another. And all four are pretty trendy.

Each one of the heroes (and heroine, let's be precise about this) had different skills, so it's up to you to decide whether you want to play the character who runs, shoots or bounces well. In two-player mode each of you can control one or two characters, so it's possible to play all four at once. Although this increases the number of points you can score, it also increases the likelyhood you of bumping into each other and dying.

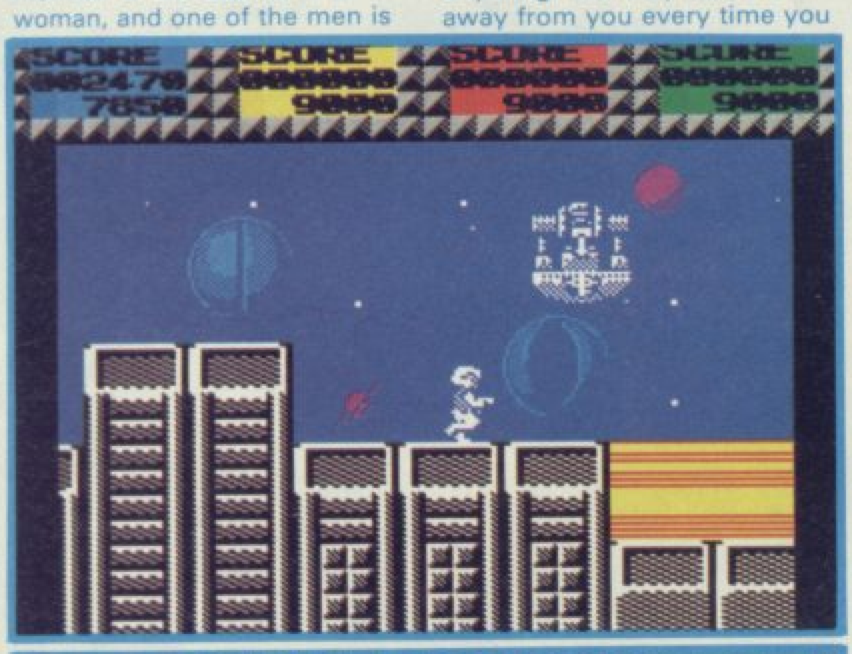
Amassing points is really what it's all about. And not losing them. One of the nice things about **Quartet** is that you can die lots of times without being eliminated. This is all due to the wonderful 9,000 points with which you start every game. Yes, they give you points before you've even done anything! But they take them away from you every time you die, and once you've lost the lot, it's Game Over for you chummy. You have a completely different counter for points scored, and it's possible to add more to your 9,000 by picking up things along the way.

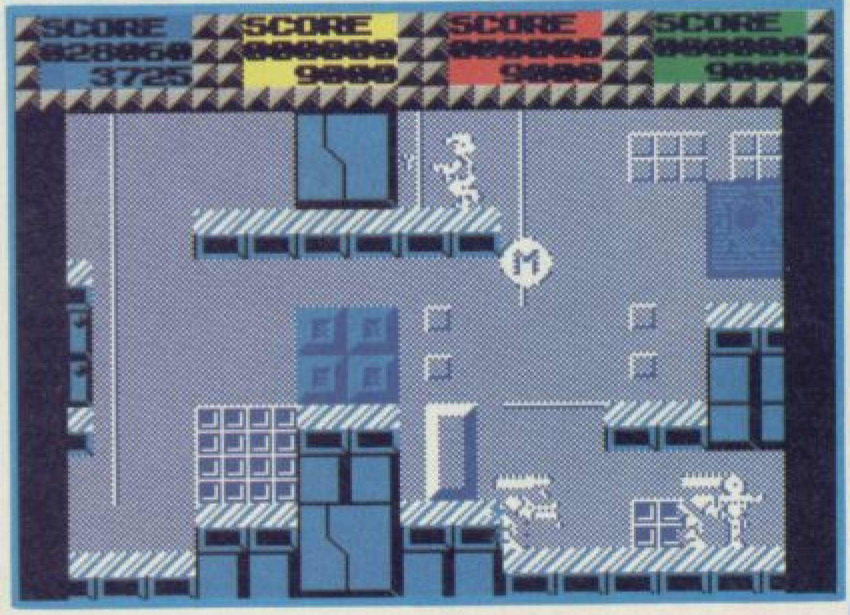
And what a lot of things there are. Springs to make you jump higher, jet-packs to make you fly and funny things which defy description but which are pretty nifty anyway.

There are 15 separate levels, which can be randomly arranged to give a maximum of 99 levels. So there's lots to do. Each of the levels are quite distinctive, but the idea is the same, avoiding the aliens, scoring points and not dying to often. (Well, don't go into a coma really, you can't die until you've lost those 9,000 points). Then there's this extra-large and really mean alien terrorist, and if you don't kill any aliens at all on the level, you just have to kill him. Because he's got the key, and without the key you can't open the door to the next level. And he's a pretty tough cookie.

Quartet's graphics are a bit on the flickery side of things and the soundtrack consists mainly of blips and bings. But this, I think, considering the rest of the game high points, is a relatively minor flaw.

Quartet should do well. It's easy to play, but there are enough things happening all the time to keep the player on his (or even her, seeing as this is a non-sexist game) toes. It also places quite a big emphasis on team spirit, the idea being that the more characters you can coerce into helping, the more points you're likely to score. And that's an idea that is at least slightly original, which in turn makes **Quartet** slightly superior to most of the other blasts around these days.





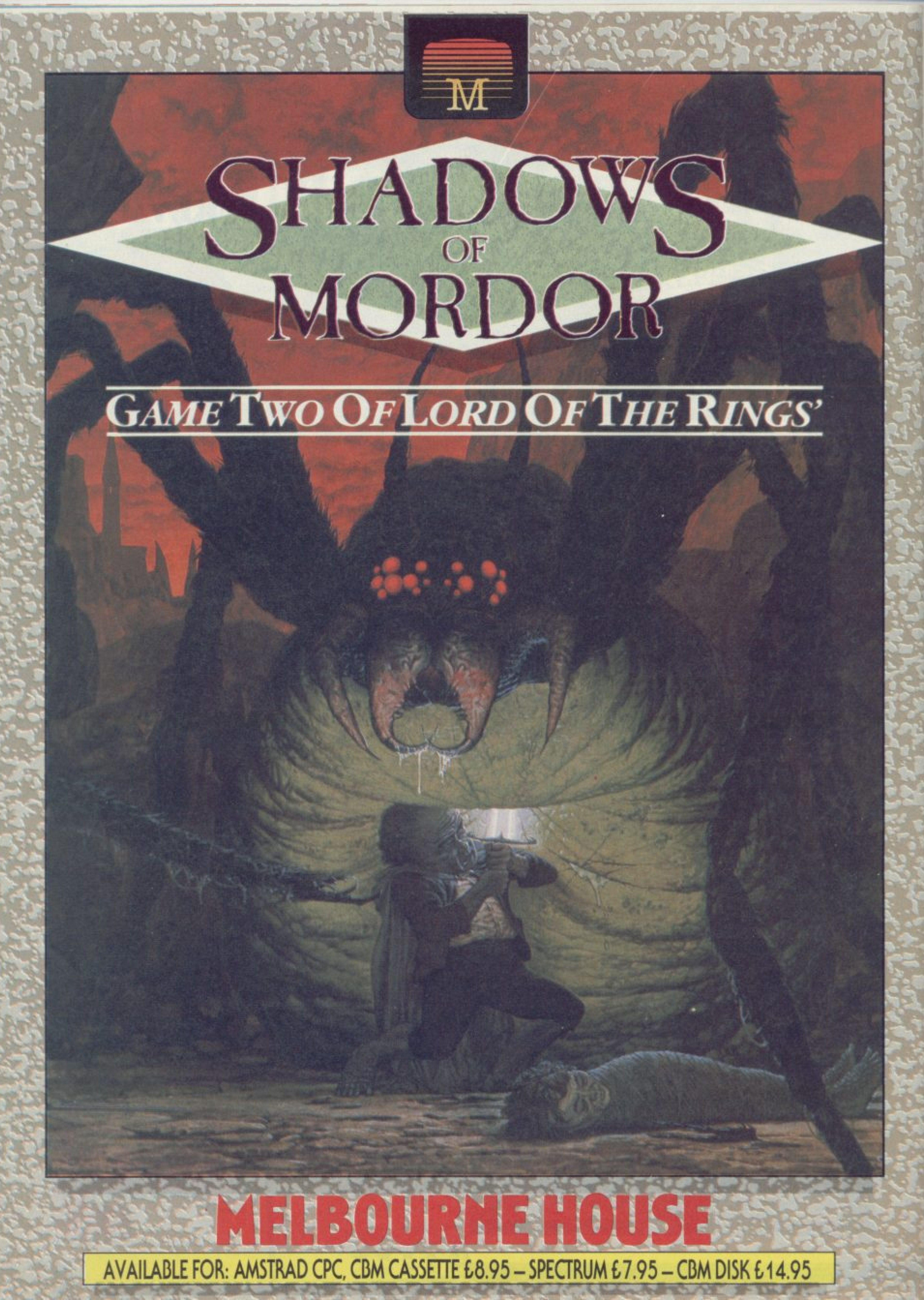
FACTS BOX

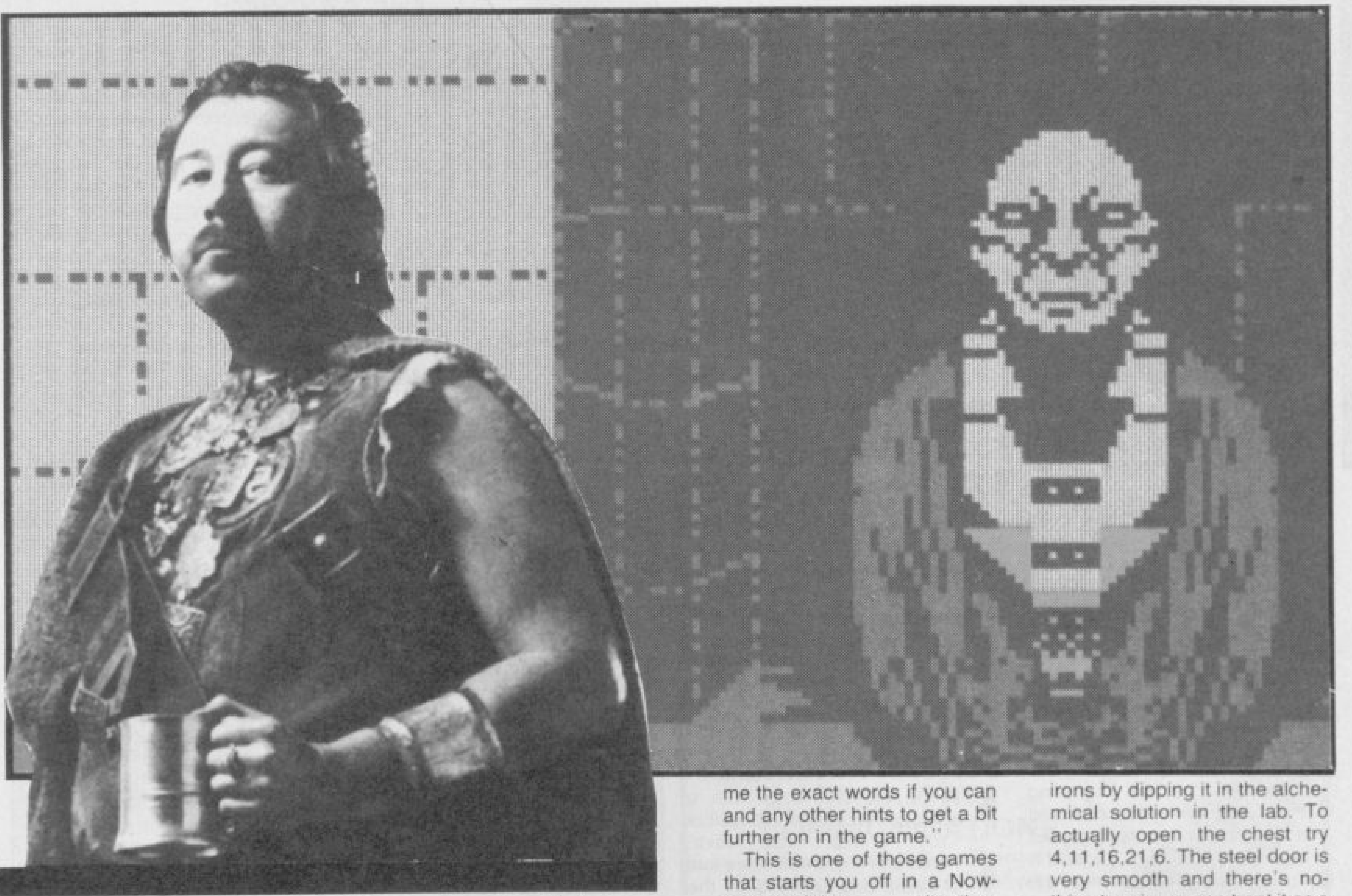
*Team spirit and fast action make **Quartet** a cut above the usual alien-killer. A nice game which should do well*

QUARTET
Label: Activision
Price: £9.99
Joystick: Sinclair/Kempston
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★★
★★★★☆


M
SHADOWS
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GAME TWO OF LORD OF THE RINGS'
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AVAILABLE FOR: AMSTRAD CPC, CBM CASSETTE £8.95 – SPECTRUM £7.95 – CBM DISK £14.95



GORDO'S HELPLINE

Getting hold of older adventure software can be a real problem for your average punter. The chain stores don't cater much for us intellectuals and, most of the time, we're lucky to find even a charted game amongst the piles of bomb, bash and boot-'em-ups. Me, I'm lucky enough to be thrown the cast-offs that the reviewing magnates up at Chateau EMAP sling out along with the empty gin bottles and caviar tins, but lesser mortals have to do a fair bit of scouting around to pick up an older game.

All of which is a roundabout way of answering D. Wright of Wolverhampton's plea as to "where, and if, a copy of **Bored of the Rings'** is still available – perhaps from Silversoft?" No, not them – I don't even know if they exist anymore. (Slight pause here while I wait for the solicitor's letter to arrive telling me how wrong I am and how sorry I'll be if I make the same mistake again). But yes! You can get the ageing but engaging epic still, direct from Delta 4 themselves. 'At the derisory price of £4.95, it's a steal," puffs merchant banker McNeil over the blower. Write to them at The Shieling, New Road, Swanmore, Hants. SO3 2PE.

I've been able to answer this Wright bloke's query but, in general, try the production company first if you can't get a piece of software. After that try out the fanzines, some of which I listed last month, and in previous issues. They often carry ads from mail order firms who offer a good range of adventures, and sometimes run their own discounted software clubs as well.

Besides thinking that SU is the greatest mag on Earth (give that man an aniseed ball. Ed.), Simon Moore of Aberdeen has other serious problems in

Kayleth

"This isn't like me I can't get past the first screen. Please, and I'm begging, how do you get off the conveyor belt? Give me the exact words if you can and any other hints to get a bit further on in the game."

This is one of those games that starts you off in a Now-get-out-of-this situation, spreadeagled on a conveyor belt and heading for some uncomfortably electrified robot claws. First you'll have to 8,13 – the steel should bend and free you. Now 17,1 to find yourself in the assembly lines of an android factory. Alarms are wailing and a menacing killer guard android is coming just for you. Don't despair but go straight up to the control unit and 20,10 to silvence the sirens and get rid of the sentinel.

You'll now have space to go back down to the conveyor and examine the machinery – some odd tape will appear. Start exploring in earnest because the tape, if used properly and with protection for your hands, can be used to open a canister which contains the set of operating programs that provide you with the powers to survive the game.

A rag-tag bungle of questions have surfaced on

Kentilla

starting with Neil Cooper who's "managed to enter Tylon's castel, turn the gold key from the bedpost into iron and have found the talisman, but I can't open the chest or get through the steel door." Pretty similar requests come from A. Cart of Tunbridge Wells who also wants to know what goes into the tungsten crucible.

If you've read my earlier tips you'll know that the golden bedpost key can be turned into irons by dipping it in the alchemical solution in the lab. To actually open the chest try 4,11,16,21,6. The steel door is very smooth and there's nothing to grip on – so treat it as a secret door and think of other ways. Go back west and examine the statue there. Now 19,3. When you return to the door you should find it's been opened.

The talisman is studded with diamonds and it's these gems that go into the tungsten crucible after they've been removed from the talisman. If you put the crucible into the furnace and operate it correctly you'll end up with some graphite – needed for the fire protection spell.

Andy Humphrey is having relationshop problems with Elva, the mysterious little helper in the game. "How do I get the longbow and arrows from him (or her, or it) without having to kill him?"

Elva's gender problem I can't reslolve for you, but one thing's for sure – it hardly seems fair to slay the critter when he, she or it spends the whole game being ever so useful and nice to you. Because your own carrying ability is limited, despite the handy sack, Elva can be asked to carry things around and hand them over when you need them.

The bow and arrows however have a special purpose very late on in the game. On your instruction Elva will shoot the dreaded Dargvool with them (sounds like a ravaging German sheep to me). As far as I know you, as main characteer, will never need the weapon so



GORDO'S HELPLINE

there's certainly no point in murdering the poor mite.

Andy goes on to ask "How can I help the pilot of the aircraft in

Spy Trek

to see?", whilst Anthony Jones of Dowlais moans, "I've tried to play the game about twenty times but all I can do is open the coffin lid – what's going wrong, what must I do?"

Let's start at the beginning then. After lifting the coffin lid it's a good idea to try to get out of your predicament. Close the curtains and then examine the suit. Now try talking to the driver of the hearse you're travelling in. The shocking results will enable you to examine everything thoroughly – if you find a pill, swallow it. This should be enough to get started and will take you to the next section of the game.

I confess to not being dead sure this pilot business but I think that you've got to ensure you get hold of a packet of onion crips from the barman – the word Unyon may come in handy here. In the bag you'll find the literal onion and, once in the place, look around to find a knife to peel the said veg. Presumably the thing will help the pilot to see. I haven't played this game yet and am using some partial tips – anyway, try it out.

Now to business. A lot of us are probably too relieved at eaching the end of a game to worry too much about whether we've got a full score. Not so Corporal 'El Konfused' Drew of Harrogate who's quite particular about this sort of thing. "I've completed Level 9's.

Colossal Adventure

in the J.O.D. Trilogy with a score of 1095 out of a possible 1100. I didn't use *Save Restore* or die, freed three lots of elves and finished in the

THE QUICKIES

REBEL PLANET:

Michael Jackson of Southville, Bristol (no relation) asks how to get past the Halmurian wolf in its cave. The Hal-Wolf is found across the Tundra river and, like most canines, responds well to cupboard love. Give a dog a bone, my son – you'll find something suitable in the museum display case. 7,2,16,15.

TWICE SHY:

Rod Albright, Torquay can't get Sarah to answer the phone – it keeps ringing, no matter what. Somehow or other you've got to foul up British Telecom (I thought BT had done this quite well already. G.G.) You could also try going back home to watch TV – this is apparently a useful thing to do when nothing else is happening and may get results. Any hints mes enfants?

SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE

CASTLE:

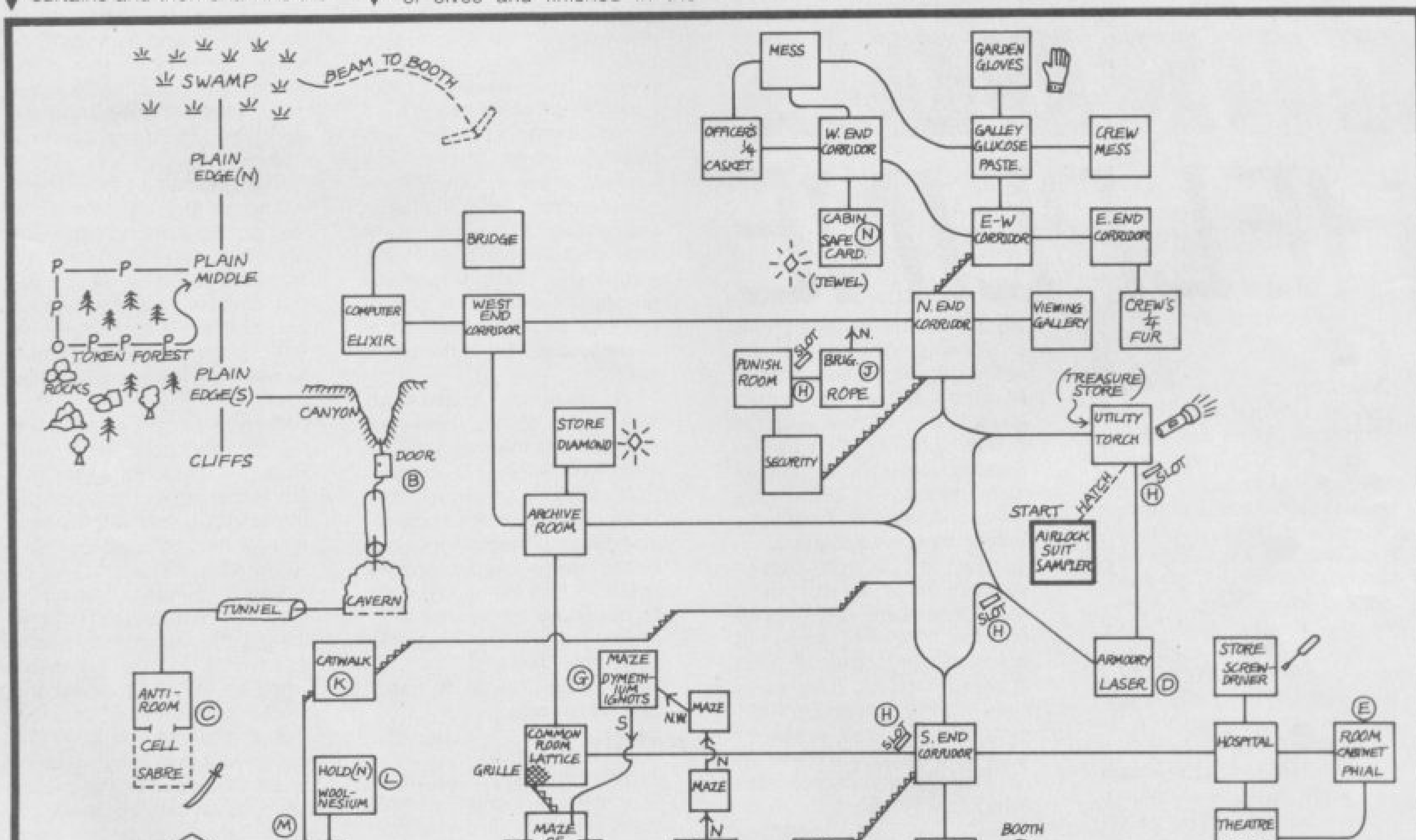
Fiona Payne, Morpeth has been stuck in the courtyard for two years – I presume late on in the game, she's not specific. Past the lava stream can be found a star and the dizzy dean spell. Get them and return to the courtyard. Go west from the fountain, take the fire bricks and cast the dizzy dean spell. Examine the battlements and throw bricks at the tin can you see. Ex2 and get the tin. Now go via the ballroom crate to find the metal opener for the can. Something nice is inside.

DRACULA:

Mat Hobson of Blaby is stuck in Stratford and doesn't know the name of Harker's company – so he can't tell the cabby where to go. You'll find the company name by reading a paper that's bought with money from the jacket in the study – it's on the chair. Say 5,12 to the cabby. When you get to the offices you'll be told of Harker's plight and then returned to the station.

TEMPLE OF VRAN:

Mrs R. Rose of Sheffield says, "I've got slab, ladder, trampoline and jewels and can get everything across the lava stream but myself." Well, the ladder and trampoline are there to get you across so 9 them at the stream. Making sure you've got the jewels, mouse, key and slab 18,22 and 14,1. You should now find yourself across the lava





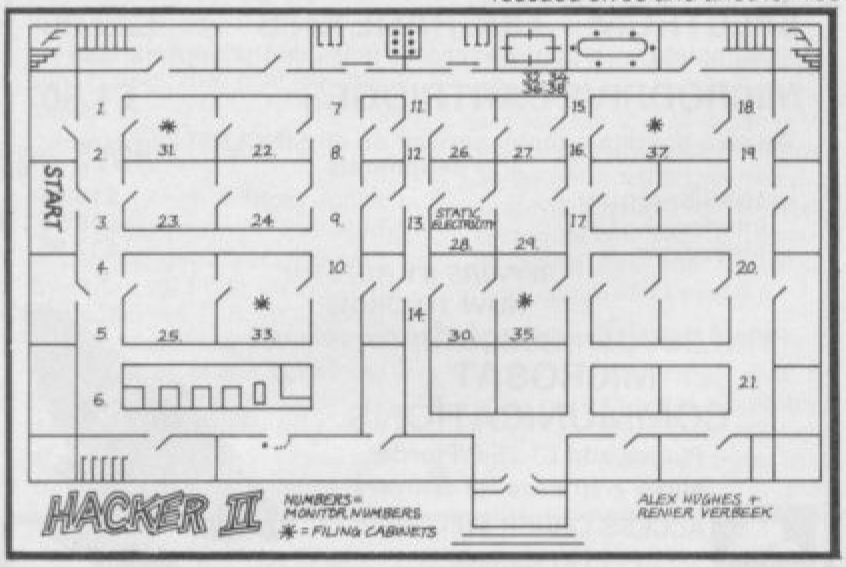
GORDO'S *HELPLINE*

Building with everything I can find, can you tell me what I've missed?

I think so. You get a basic score of 30 less 10 per death plus another 30 for reaching the Hall of Mists. Reaching End Game gets you another 50, with 5 for finding each treasure and 10 for owning or collecting all fifteen. The Crown Jewels count as 50 each – the Orb, Sceptre and Crown – and there are bonus awards of 9 for not using *Quit*, 1 for not using *Save*.

Exploding the dynamite gets you 20, 80 for slaying the dwarves and 100 for surviving the blast in doing so. Then there's 100 for each group of rescued elves and another 100 for actually finishing. But... you get an extra five points for leaving an object in the right place. El Konfused has done all the right things except this, because, as he says, he's got the Spelunkers' Gazette in the building with him. Wrong, sorry.

The gazette should be left in Witt's End, found by heading repeatedly east from Bedquilt. Only thuswise will you attain perfection and if I'm wrong I'll eat my breeches. Back to the keyboard, 0 bewildered one, for another 72 session. Ain't life hard sometimes?



GREATBELLY'S THINGY

1: UP 2: GLASS 3: ARMS 4: UNLOCK 5: MESSRS 6: KEY 7: MELT 8: BREAK 9: DROP 10: LEVER 11: CHEST 12: HAWKINS 13: CLAWS 14: JUMP 15: LASER 16: WITH 17: GET 18: CLIMB 19: MOVE 20: PULL 21: IRON 22: LADDER

THE SOLUTIONS

First this month you'll find another of Sandy Duncan's comprehensive maps and tips, this time for Atlantis' excellent **'Marie Celeste'**.

Wayne Legister (see Quickies) has forwarded a fast and dirty answer to

PLANET OF DEATH

"Take the flint, go down and cut the rope. S,E, get the boots and floor board. Wear the boots, N and cross ravine. Get the gun in the hut, cross the ravine and go N,W,W and then go down using the rope. E and get the gloves, then wear them. Open the door, get the keys, W, W. Get the man, drop man and kill man with gun. Get the mirror, S and shoot force field. Say Vanity Waltz and you'll find yourself in the space hangar. Open the locked door with the key and go W. Push 3, then 2, then 1. Ex2, get motor and go W, Go into the space ship and push aux. Now push 4. End of game."

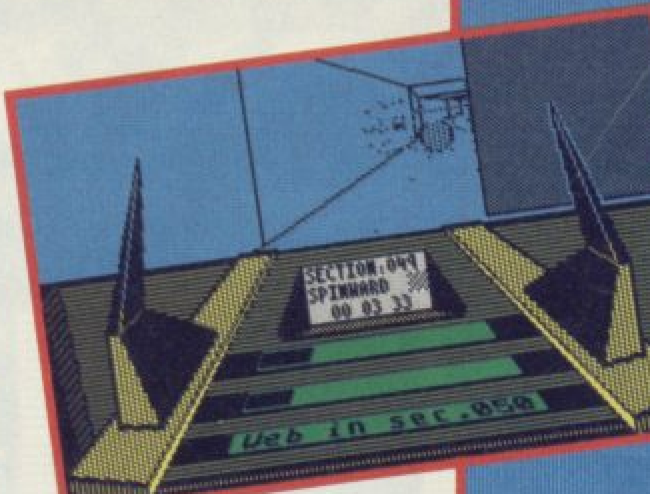
This is yet another way to get around the force-field problem and avoids the dancing that seems to have been a feature of most of the tips I get sent.

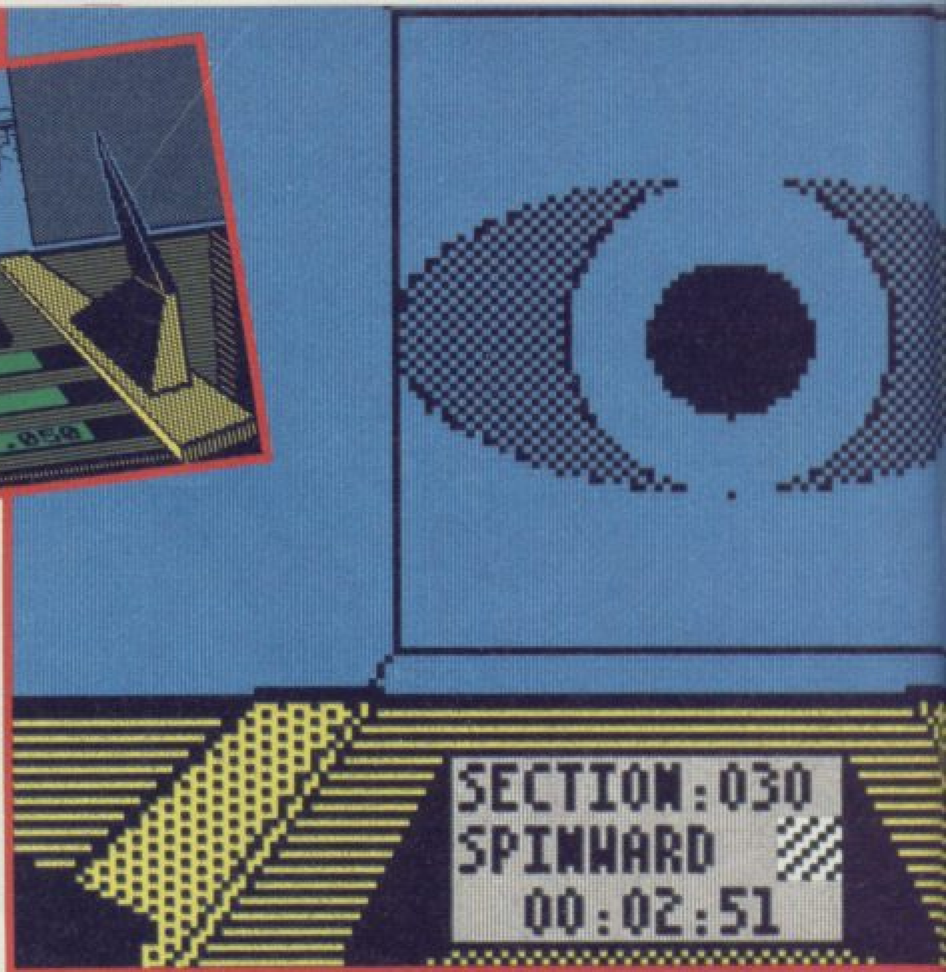
That's it, 'til next moon.

GORDO.



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MICRONAUT ONE

Oh, alright, I admit it, when I first saw Pete **Tau Ceti** Cooke's latest, **Micronaut One,** the only thing that I could think was Ooer!

And with good reason. **Micronaut One** defies any other sort of description. Not only that but it contains some of the most brilliant 3D graphics ever seen on the Spectrum. For the first time ever, as far as I'm aware, you've got solid 3D fast scrolling creating a brilliant illusion of travelling along tunnels.

One recent point of reference would be Firebird's **Hive.**

Don't even think about it – there's no comparison.

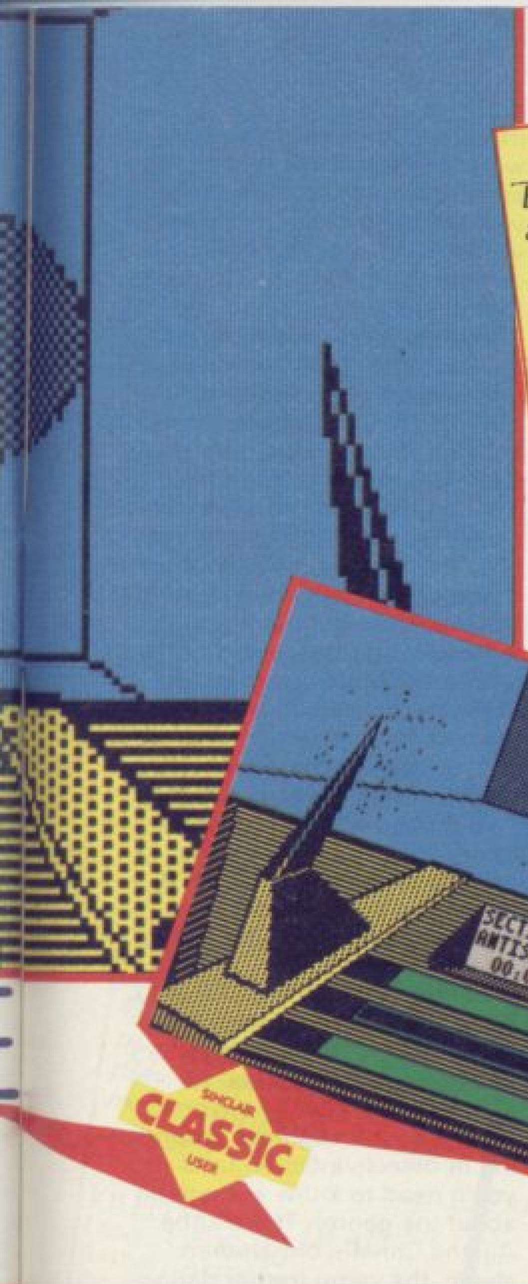
Micronaut is real and solid – you'll believe you were there!! And also, Pete Cooke knows all about gameplay.

It's the graphics and gameplay which matter here so the story behind **Micronaut** is simple.

Civilisation has taken something of a turn for the worse. Mutations are rife, barbarism is the order of the day and society has built this computer. But not just any old computer. Due to the fact that metal is in such short supply, computers have to be formed out of (gulp) living biological organisms. The resulting biocomputer is a bit on the unstable side, and needs constant maintenance. And then, there's the Scrim to think about.

The Scrim are the bad guys. Or, in this case, the bad flies. A mutated descendent of the common fruit fly, Scrim feed off the energy generated by the biocomputers. Owing to the fact that they lay eggs left, right and centre, and spin sticky webs all over the place, the scrim tend to block off access to the Energy Transfer Units (ETUs) leading to lack of maintenance, extreme instability, a short explosion and a nasty case of death for all concerned. Mass elimination of the Scrim is therefore the order of the day, making **Micronaut One** a sort of computerised, space-age version of Rentokil.

Dealing with the Scrim is not easy. Flying around in your craft, armed only with a rather puny generator, it's important to keep up the energy levels, or else your generator won't kill anything. Scrim eggs are practically indestructible, and the larvae and adult jellyfliers are pretty tough too. So you have to keep on topping up the energy levels of your own craft, as well as those of the



FACTS BOX

Brilliant 3D graphics, and gameplay. You may take a while to understand it, but in the end, you'll be hooked

MICRONAUT ONE
Label: Nexus
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: Kempston

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★★★★★★★ **10**



biocomputer. Energy clouds are useful here. Don't, as I did, keep firing at the little swarm-like things that keep coming your way, they're not masses of Scrim, they're energy particles, and if you fly into them, you'll absorb them. (By the way, when you do come across a Scrim, you'll know about it).

Scrim are huge. Great big umbrella shaped things that fly straight into your ship and make you go all wobbly. Huge wobbly larvae which head butt you and push you backwards for several feet. Golf-ball sized eggs which no amount of firing at, pushing about or swearing at will destroy. And thick, sticky webs which cling to the ship, and ripple gently as they pull away from the window.

The graphics are astounding. The sensation is of flying through tunnels, things appearing around corners, Scrim flying out of nowhere, and larvae leaping out at you. The ETUs are huge, blinking eyes; solid graphics which seem to fill up half the screen. Attribute problems are avoided by the use of two colours.

It's a triumph of programming, and a fiendishly difficult game. There are several windows which you can summon from the main menu to help you. Maps, ETU energy

ARCADE REVIEW

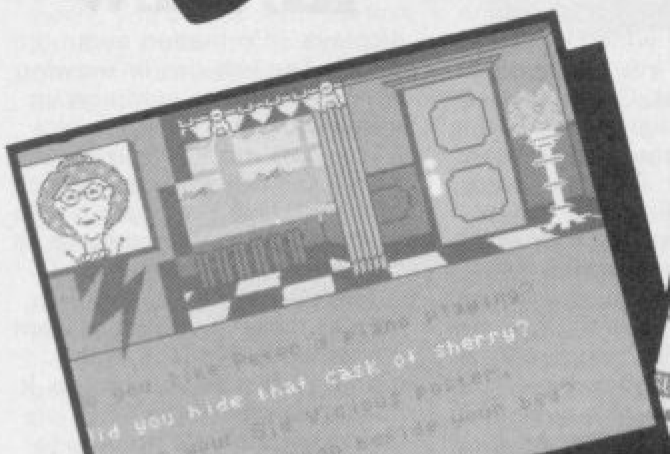
displays, information about the Scrim. The skill lies in knowing which window to summon up when you get a message or a warning. A monitor will tell you where the webs are, and which of the ETUs is in danger. It's up to you to get there and sort it all out. And boy, is that hard.

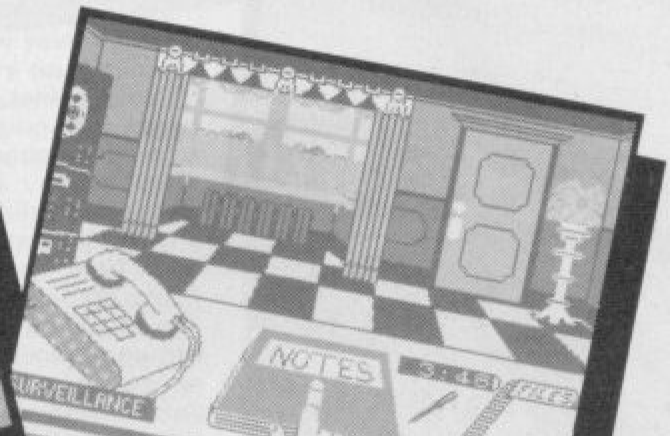
There's also a race game in here as well – if you really want it – which is five laps of the tunnel as fast as you can go. It doesn't appear to be very interesting, there's nothing to shoot at, or obstacles in the way, but as an exercise in learning the layout of the tunnels and learning to fly the ship, it's pretty useful.

Micronaut One is pretty ingenious. It requires thought and strategy to get through it but instant oblivion is always around the corner. It's a really nice mix of blast and skill.



KILLED





UNTIL DEAD

'Bonjour Monsier Slammair! I 'ave to tell you zat I am suspecting you of attempting to murder ze tres belle Mademoiselle Claudia on ze patio avec le bombe surprise.

Vous aves un alibi tres good? Sacre nom de Bertlillon! Ma reputation as ze greatest half-French half-English detective, she is up ze spout!

"Eau neau, a revolvair is being pointed at moi through le fenestre! I am being shert! Ma foi, I am daid! I lay down! Now ze murderair will be able to perform ze fould deed wiz impunity . . .

Killed Until Dead is a murder mystery game. Not so much an adventure, as a business management game for budding private detectives. A bit like **The Fourth Protocol** was a business management for spies.

Anyway, the basic plot is simple: you are Hercule Holmes and you know that a murder is going top be committed tonight. Both the victim and the murderer are members of a world famous crime writers association, the Murder Club, you have to identify murderer, victim, location and method and stop the devilish affair before it happens.

It's very reminiscent of that old favourite, **Cluedo,** except that instead of challenging other players to tell you if they have or haven't got a particular card, you try to weasel useful information out of the five suspects. They will tell you things like; 'If Claudia is the killer, then it won't be with the bomb', or 'if the victim is Sydney, the method won't be poison'. After you've collected a whole slew of these, you can start eliminating certain combinations, until you've reached the point where you think you know the answer.

At that point you challenge the killer, reveal your guess, and if you're right you win, if you're not you get shot by a mysterious figure at the window.

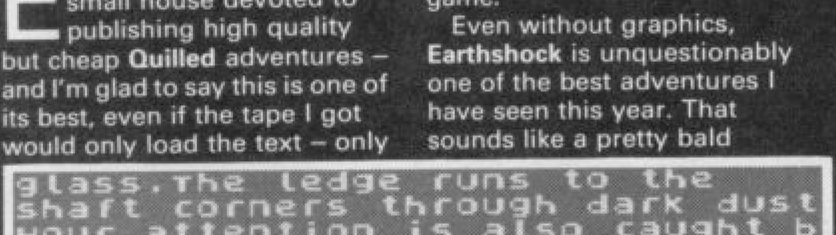
At the start of the game, you access your files and read the profiles of the five potential murderers/murderesses. All should be familiar to anyone with even the slightest grounding in detective fiction (and you'll need to know something about the genre). There's the Agatha Christie old woman sleuth, the vamp (rather daringly called Claudia von Bulow - very similar to the name of a certain gentleman acquitted of attempting to murder his wife not so long ago), Lord Peter Flimsey, Mike Slammer and Sidney Meanstreet. They all have their own pictures as well.

To help you in your quest to get the necessary proof, you have a number of useful

EARTHSHOCK

Eighth Day Software is a small house devoted to publishing high quality but cheap **Quilled** adventures – and I'm glad to say this is one of its best, even if the tape I got would only load the text – only version of this, their latest game.

Even without graphics, **Earthshock** is unquestionably one of the best adventures I have seen this year. That sounds like a pretty bald statement, but any game which marries inventiveness of plot with incredibly rich and atmospheric location descriptions just has to get my vote for the tops.



I quote: 'Small clouds of dark dust fall from above and drift slowly through the air down into the depths of the shaft, caught momentarily in the glare of your lamp, illuminated by the light as if alive, they disappear and are gone, spiralling down into the stifling darkness.'

Now you and I both know that most adventure houses would have been content with: 'You see a shaft. It is deep. It is dark. It is stifling'.

And how about 'the bloated, blood red sun taints the earth a deep red, as if an open festering wound?' All the location descriptions are like that. I'm not saying they constitute Booker prize winning material, but let's hear a round of applause for Eighth Day's brave attempts to reintroduce literacy and descriptive prose to adventuring.

Right, quieten down now and we can get to the rest of the game. It is the far future. The earth, poisoned with radioactivity, has been transformed over much of its surface into a seared, poisonous desert. Across this desert trek the remnants of humanity – pitiful nomad tribes, struggling to regain the civilisation their ancestors so senselessly threw away. Danger abounds – for one thing, bands of mutants roam the land, hideous creatures who hate normal people. But the real threat lies below – the androids.

Left to their own devices when humanity bombed itself

gadgets on your desk top, and can perform various actions.

Then you try to get further information by searching their rooms. To get into each room, you have to be able to answer a murder trivia question, like 'Who was Mike Hammer's partner?'. It's not as difficult as it sounds, as the questions have multiple-choice answers and if you don't get it right this time, you can always come back later and try again, although you lose time (you have only 12 game hours).

Once you're in a suspect's room, you find various interesting things, which you make notes of. Later, you can ring up that particular suspect and let slip that you know something about him or her that you shouldn't. Get the right button, as it were, and they say 'have you been spying on me?', which shows immense perspicacity.

Their eyes get big, and they look very nervous, and you can start pumping them about the case. You do this by a menu-driven system, so you can cover the whole spectrum of who, where, and with what, although they'll clam up after a while and you'll have to try something else.

The whole thing actually works pretty well, considering the limitations that the game structure imposes. The windowing helps you stop you getting to bored from sitting at your desk all the time – you get to see the peple you're talking to by phone. The great thing is when you show you know all about them – their eyes pop and they start waving their hands about. Claudia even starts looking green, before she disappears off-screen to throw up. Sidney's cigar moves around his face, like some sort of signalling device – all very amusing the first few times at least.

There are four difficulty levels, and seven different scenarious to choose from, which makes at least 28 different plots to sort out. Actually, it looks like there are far more than that, if what US Gold tells me is kosher – who, where and with what are chosen randomly each time, so that means there should be seven factorial times four factorial take away the number you first thought of and add the ABC figure which means a lot.

A very big figure. And that's a close as I can get.

So at £8.99, well worth loading up – amusing graphics supported by some logic problems that should push you to the time limit with ease, plus extra mystery trivia for the murder buffs■

FACTS BOX

Good value, easy to pick up, challenging gameplay with strategy element – indeed a winnair, ma dear Watson

KILLED UNTIL DEAD
Label: US Gold
Author: Artech
Price: £8.99
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★☆ **9**

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back into the Stone Age, the androids have decided to seek out a brave new world where they can start all over again. To that end, they have created a Space Ark, into which they are loading the Earth's remaining mineral wealth. Being tidy-minded little metal monsters, they don't intend to leave any litter behind. Once free of the planet's gravity well, they plan on exploding a doomsday device which will destroy the whole world.

Although you don't realise it at the start of the game, it's your job to stop them – armed with a bow and arrow, and a flint tipped spear. Boy, that flying pig just missed me!

Not content with a great little plot and magnificent prose, all at the measly price of £3.99, Eighth Day has very sneakily slotted in alternative sub-plots. At some point in the game, you're going to meet a shaman: he'll give you three choices. Each one leads into a different mini-adventure within the main adventure – and each different sub-plot will apparently bring a different end-game into play, so you will be able to play the game three times!

Great stuff – worthy of an adventure selling at twice the price. Why Eighth Day's catalogue hasn't been snatched up by one of the big publishers I still don't know. Buy it – you won't regret it■

FACTS BOX

Very atmospheric and tough adventure with a twist – three different solutions – all for £3.99! No joke!

EARTHSHOCK
Label: Eighth Day
Author: in-house
Memory: 48K
Price: £3.99

Reviewer: Gary Rook

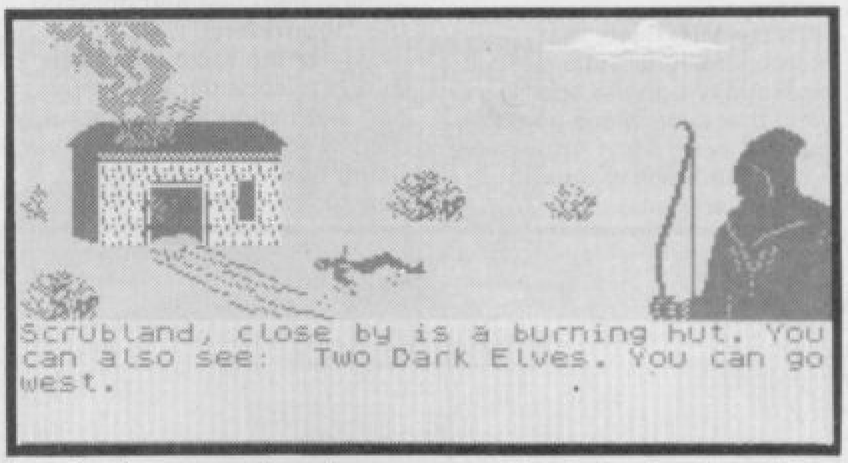
★★★★★ **10**

ADVENTURE REVIEW

TEMPLE OF TERROR

Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone have been cleaning up for quite a number of years with their *Fighting Fantasy* books regularly entering the best seller charts, much to the annoyance of many 'proper' authors.

Basically, *Fighting Fantasy* books are solo dungeons (of the type pioneered by the *Tunnels and Trolls* system) in a paperback book. You are given the senario, then a number of decision choices. Pick one, and you turn to page seven, pick another and it's page 31, and so on. A bit like an extended flow-diagram. Therefore a perfect target for putting on computer. . . and US Gold has both the money and sense to do it.



Temple of Terror, then, is based on an old *FF* book of the same name circa 1982, but made into an adventure with some graphics by Adventuresoft. And the result isn't bad, if a little bland.

Chief baddie Malbordus has been brought up by the Elves (not a pleasant experience at the best of times), and has been picking up tips on how to be naughty during his formative years. Lacking a caring social worker, he's gone bad, and has decided to pay a visit to the city of Vatos, across the Desert of Skulls (second on the right past the newsagents). If he finds the five Dragon artifacts therein, the known world is in big trouble, right?

Luckily, the pet crow of the kindly Wizard Yaztromo (yes, people were paid money to write this plot) overheard these plans, and he hot–footed it from his bacholer pad in the Darkwood to get help.

You volunteered, and you start off at the lip of a rope bridge, just about to be captured by pirates.

It's a 'solve this puzzle in four moves or you're dead' adventure beginning. Not that it's difficult, but I prefer a little more introduction to my adventures.

And so it goes on. The presentation is good (new character set, nice graphics with each location) but it's the content that bothers me. The problems are not going to keep you held up forever if you are an experienced pixie, the location descriptions are far from verbose and the parser, although adequate, is nothing special. One annoying thing, the *Get All* command, although documented in the instructions, is not implemented in the game itself. Slapped wrists. The book was about a couple of quid, the program's over three times that. Think before buying■

FACTS BOX

Plot from old Fighting Fantasy book, nicely presented but short on content. Experienced players will find it easy

TEMPLE OF TERROR
Label: US Gold
Price: £8.99
Joystick: n/a
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Robert Martin

★★★☆☆ **6**

BUDGET

£1·99 £2·99

REVIEW

MILK RACE

There's nothing like a refreshing bike ride across the country to leave you feeling really knackered.

So Mastertronic has gone completely over the top and given you one that lasts for a thousand miles and takes you to places of interest such as Lincoln, Peterborough and London.

It's the **Milk Race**, that internationally famous and exceedingly popular sporting event that takes place across England every May. And you're in it, about halfway down the list of 84 entrants.

It's a left to right scrolly affair in thirteen stages, and you've got to win all of them to end up first at the finish and get to wear the cute little yellow vest.

For a budget game, this is pretty hot stuff. There are lots of twiddly bits to be considered, like speed, energy, gear and the slope of the road. It's certainly not just a question of riding around very fast and dodging the other riders.

One of the most important things to consider (as well as pedalling about like a bat out of hell) is your energy level. This being the Milk Race, your sources of energy are the milk churns lying by the roadside. Once your energy level starts to drop, you're in trouble, so keep those churns coming, folks. Whilst picking up the churns it's important to watch the curves in the road, since some of them come together, and if you catch your wheel, you're down and in trouble.



And a word about coming off yer bike. It's necessary to be picked up by a friendly person who'll give you a bit of a push. And that person is a schizophrenic in an Escort Cabriolet.

Why is he a schizo you ask. Well, it's either that, or he's got serious clutch trouble with the Escort. As well as picking you up, he also knocks you over again, by bouncing all over the road in a frenzied attempt to mash you into the ground. But then he always comes back to send you on your way again.

While the graphics aren't brilliant (what do you want for £1.99 blood? And no, there isn't any in this one), they are quite nice: pedalling, coasting along and falling over are all realistically handled.

My one big gripe is that all the riders are the same colour, which makes identificaltion tricky. It's OK when you're plodding along in second at the back, but when you get into the pack, it's too easy to get knocked over because you can't tell which bike is you. And that means the Cabriolet gets to come back again.

With spot time trials to win, pot holes to dodge, gears to change, milk to drink and many Escort drivers to escape, **Milk Race** has an awful lot going for it. It'll really shake you up. (I don't know any other milk jokes, you'll be glad to know)■

FACTS BOX

A nice spoof on the real race. Entertaining with a touch of suspense, when's that next milk churn coming along?

MILK RACE
Label: Mastertronic
Author: Icon
Price: £1.99
Joystick: Various
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★☆
★★★★☆ 8

KICK BOXING



It's not that I don't like kicking people in pyjama bottoms to death. I mean, don't get me wrong, I enjoy that just as much as the next person. Only not like this.

If you're going to kick someone in jim-jams to death, you might as well know exactly what it is that you're doing. You ought to have some sort of control over your bodily functions (can I say that, without being misconstrued)? You should at least be able to tell which one on the screen is you.

None of which you're actually able to do with Firebird's **Kick Boxing**. Because it's naff.

This is a game with no street cred. And no pyjama tops. The idea is to kick mighty Mick the Meat Kicker before he kicks you and thus win the competition, the crowd's adulation and a Hollywood contract etc, etc.

All very well. You have lots of moves, high kick, low kick, punches, and, most importantly, back off, block and run away. But they all look the same. And none of them seem to have any effect. I found that the best way to score points was just to waggle the joystick about not very challenging really. The points mount up quite quickly, but your endurance level will drop and that'll be you out of the running.

I find it hugely suspicious that when playing **Kick Boxing** it's possible to get on to the Roll of Honour just for waggling your joystick. I found it even more suspicious that I couldn't identify myself, since both of the fighters on the screen seem to do the same moves at the same time.

And I found the way one of the men kept dropping his trousers when he turned round, very distressing. Good job the graphics aren't up to much.

I'm not impressed. And neither will you be■

FACTS BOX

It's games like this that give the budget software industry a bad name. Truly dull, apart from the pyjama bottoms

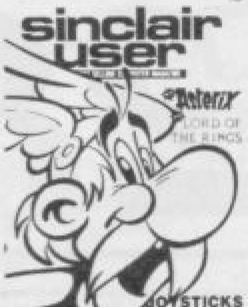
KICK BOXING
Label: Firebird
Price: £1.99
Joystick: Various
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★☆☆☆☆
☆☆☆☆☆ 1

BACK ISSUES

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CLASSICS: Wham! The Music Box, Tau Cetti, The Pawn, Robin of Sherlock, Spellbound, Exploring Micronet.
FEATURES: Joystick roundup, Exploring Micronet.



FEBRUARY 86 No 48
CLASSICS: Enigma Force, Three Weeks in Paradise, Lord of the Rings, Plus Classic AMS Mouse review.
FEATURES: Become a Tomahawk pilot.



MARCH 86 No 48
CLASSIC GAMES: Forbidden Planet, Movie, Desert Rats, Worm in Paradise.
FEATURES: Lord of the Rings map, hints and tips for Tau Ceti.



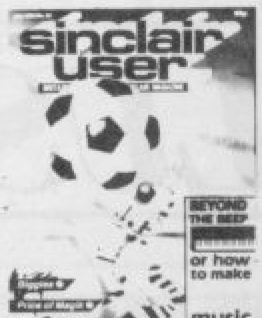
APRIL 86 No 49
CLASSICS: Animator 1, The Wanderer, Plus top games Spitfire 40, Skyfox, Friday 13th.
FEATURES: 9 pages 128 feature including Daley's Supertest and music programming.



MAY 86 No 50
CLASSICS: Quazatron, Turbo Esprit, Batman, 128 Music Box, Plus Classic review of The Last Work.
FEATURES: Three word processing packages assessed.



JUNE 86 No 51
CLASSICS: Kirel, Heavy on the Magick, Ballblazer, Plus top games Starstrike II, Green Beret, Way of the Tiger, Alien Highway and Rasputin.
FEATURES: Super Scoop, The Liki, toolkit round up.



JULY 86 No 52
CLASSICS: Price of Magik, Ghosts 'n' Goblins, Spindizzy, Laser Genius.
FEATURES: Beyond the Beep (real music on the Spectrum).



AUGUST 86 No 53

SOLD OUT



SEPTEMBER 86 No 54
CLASSICS: PSi Chess, Elite Trap Door plus all the top games Xarq, Mindstone, Ace.
FEATURES: Modern Magic, Dark Sceptre scrutinized.



OCTOBER 86 No 55
CLASSICS: Lightforce, Glider Rider, Deactivators, Dan Dare, Harrier, Trivial Pursuit, Revolution, Vera Cruz.
FEATURES: Music Machine Reviewed. Exclusive interview with Amstrad's Malcolm Miller.



NOVEMBER 86 No 56
CLASSICS: Firelord, Hardball, Dandy, Uridium, Artist II, not to mention gaming excitement with Asterix, Galvan, TT Racer, Druid and plenty more.
FEATURES: Micros in the Movies.



DECEMBER 86 No 57
CLASSICS: Sacred Armour of Antiriad, Star Glider, Great Escape, Wintergames 128, Colour of Magic, Fairlight II, Plus a review of the long awaited Knight Rider.
FEATURES: Meet the Micro Mercenaries.



JANUARY 87 No 58
CLASSICS: Aliens, Double Take, Zub, Samuri, Pawn (128) Plus all the top Christmas games Dracula, Contact Sam Cruise, Frostbite, Nosferatu, City Slicker.
FEATURES: Maps for Glider Rider and Great Escape and Judge Dredd in person.



FEBRUARY 87 No 58
CLASSICS: Silicon Dreams, 128k Art Studio, but there are 5 star review of Hive, Marble Madness construction set, Gauntlet, Impossaball, Golf, Sword and Shield to name but a few.
FEATURES: New 128k + 2 owners pull out guide, Druid and Sacred Armour of Antiriad maps.



MARCH 87 No 59
CLASSICS: Nemesis, Into the Eagles Nest, Shadow Skimmer, Shockway Rider, Ranarama, Little Computer People, plus over £20 worth of money off games coupons.
FEATURES: Outlands, Wargames special, news scoop the 128k + 3, Nemesis poster.

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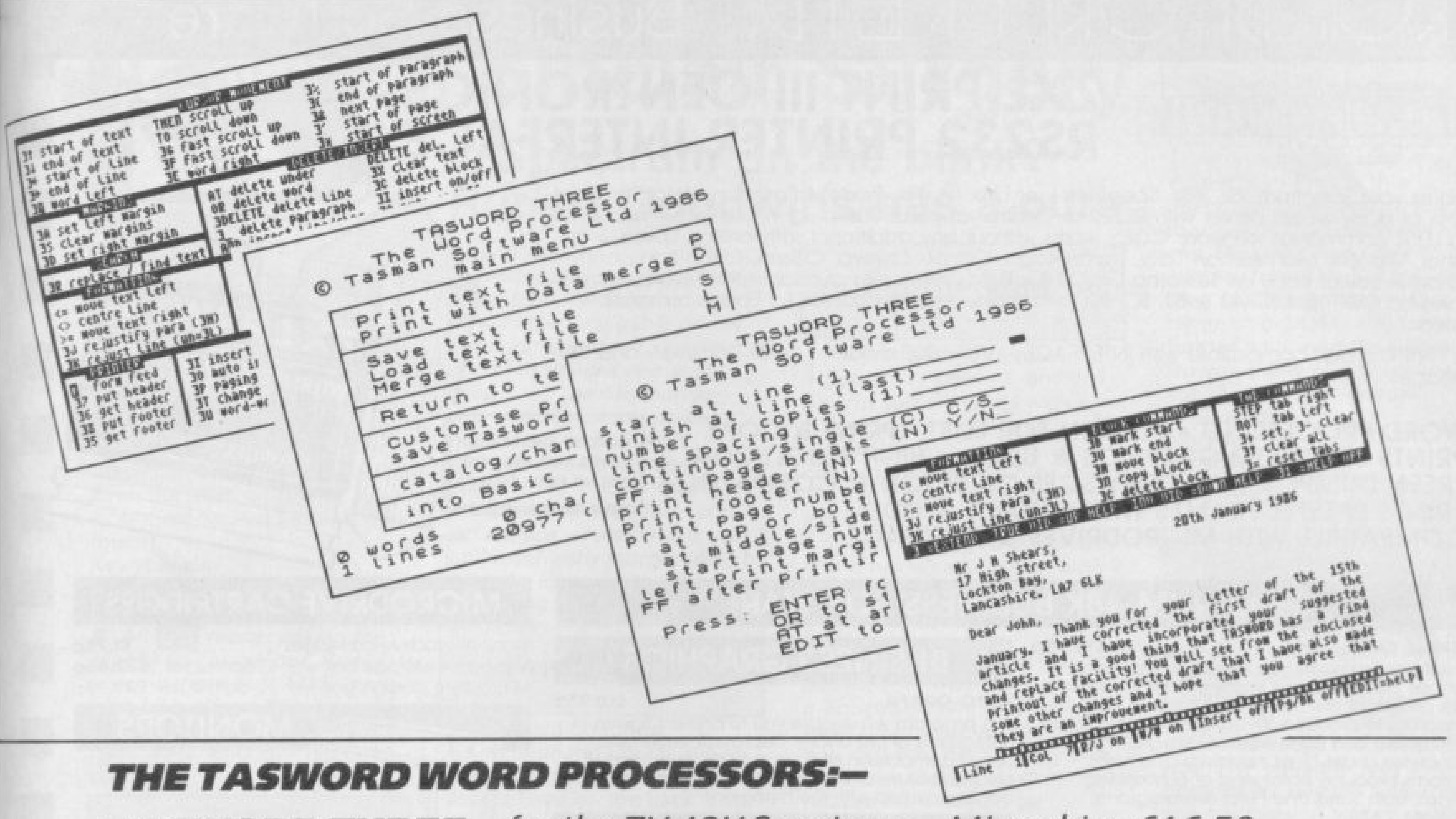
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SUPERFILE. £14.95p
This is a new database program that stores pages of text 64 columns x 22 rows. The program includes word processing and full search facilities.

V-NOTCH. £12.95p
Index and Catalogue System, for collections of photographs, recipes, books, knitting patterns, stamps, etc. Up to 3500 items per file full search facilities.

BUSINESS GRAPHICS

HISTO-GRAPH. £10.95p
This program will enable you to present figures in histograms or pie charts. Displays 3 years as a direct comparison or 5 years to show a trend. A unique feature of this program is that all the figures can be printed with the histogram.

UTILITIES

DLAN by Campbell Systems £7.95p
Use your Spectrum to sell your products. Dlan will display messages in up to 11 different typefaces. Will scroll text in any direction.

TASWIDE by Tasman Software £5.50p
You can use this program within your other programs to display 64 columns on screen.

MF-PRINT by Campbell Systems £6.95p
Enables you to set a print format for your full-size printer within masterfile. Supplied complete with masterfile for **£19.95**.

TRANSEXPRESS by Romantic Robot £9.95p
Micro-drive utility program which will enable you to back-up all your micro-drive cartridges.

TASCOPY by Tasman Software £9.90p
This program allows you to produce 3 sizes of screen copy using Interface 1.

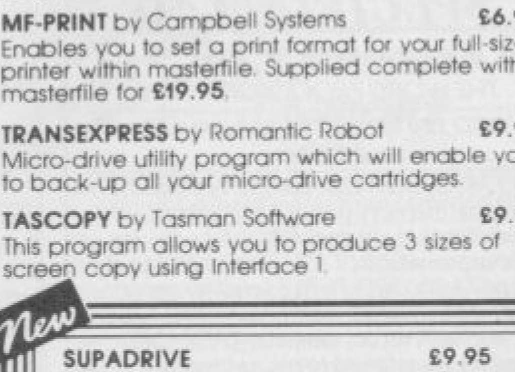
New

SUPADRIVE £9.95
This program supplied on microdrive allows you to format a cartridge on the spectrum with 100-105K, retrieve corrupted files or print a full catalogue showing addresses and start lines

ACCESSORIES

Microdrive storage boxes	£4.95p
RS 232 lead	£11.50p
Monichrome monitor connector	£11.50p
3½" floppy discs	£2.70p
Continuous Paper 2000 sheets	£13.00p
Continuous labels 1000	£6.65p

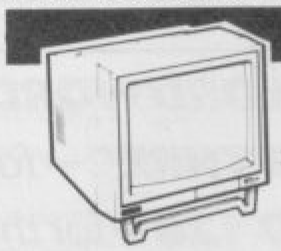
Add £1.30p post for label, £3.75p post for paper



MICRODRIVE CARTRIDGES

Blank microdrive cartridges	£1.75p
Microdrive storage box with 10 cartridges	£22.45p
Microdrive storage box with 20 cartridges	£39.95p

MONITORS



	Ex VAT	Inc VAT
Philips 7502 monochrorne	£75.00p	£86.25p
Philips 8533 RGB + C/V	£250.00p	£287.50p
Spectrum monitor lead	£10.00p	£11.50p

PRINTERS

Dot Matrix

Seikosha SP180A Centronic	£179.00p	£205.85p
Brother M1109	£185.00p	£212.75p
Epson LX86	£215.00p	£247.25p
Taxan Kaga	£250.00p	£287.50p
Epson FX85	£368.00p	£423.20p

DAISY WHEEL

Silver Reed EXP 400	£215.00p	£247.25p
Brother HR15XL	£430.43p	£495.00p

Delivery of monitors & printers £5.75p

OPUS DISCOVERY SOFTWARE

TRANSDATA £14·95

OPUS DISCOVERY DISC UTILITY PROGRAM

Business Pack	£17.95p
Sales/Purchase Ledger Invoicing	£25.00p
Tasword Three	£19.50p
Stock Control	£13.95p
Omnicalc 2	£21.90p
Masterfile+MFprint	£22.95p
Superfile	£14.95p
V-Notch	£12.95p
Histo-graph	£14.95p
Dlan	£10.95p
Transexpress	£14.95p
Tascopy	£12.90p

All programs supplied on 3 1/2" discs.

DISCS

10 x 3 1/2" blank discs	£27.00p
Box to hold 12 discs	£5.50p

Access

TRANSFORM LTD (DEPT. SU7) 01-658 6350
Mail order only. 24 West Oak, Beckenham, Kent. BR3 2EZ

VISA

SURGERY

Sinclair Surgery

Spectrum on the blink? Rupert Goodwins has a cure

New Multiface?

I am looking for an interface such as Romantic Robot's Multiface One to enable me to transfer programs to Opus, Microdrive or tape. However, they all seem to be 48K only. Even the 128K ones only work in 48K mode. Am I asking too much?

Kev Hansen
Kilwinning
Ayrshire

● *An* SU *reader asking too much? Of course not. Rumours abound that a true 128K version of the Multiface One is on the stocks even as I two-fingeredly type. Good enough? I should coco*

Sort that crash!

Thanks for the fault finder in issue 58! I managed to use it replace a faulty ULA, and now my Spectrum works again without having seen the inside of a repair shop. However, I still have a problem in that when I try and use my Alphacom 32 printer the computer usually crashes. What should I try now?

P J Cimatti
Llandudno
Gwynedd

● *Quick! A satisfied customer! Have him stuffed. . . But all is not happiness. It seems to me that it's probably the Z80A that's at fault, so try replacing that next. Otherwise it could be an intermittent short circuit in the printer cable. These are where the cable is soldered on to the edge connector is a popular place for such misdemeanours, so you might like to give that a gander*

Into overload

I 've currently got a Microvitec monitor, Interface 1, two Microdrives and an Epson FX Printer attached to my Spectrum+. I think I'm at the limit of my power supply, but I'd like to add an AMX Mouse.

Is this so, and if it is can I attach another power supply so that I can add more?

Jan Kent
Oslo
Norway

● *At the moment I'd say that your were OK as far as power supplys go, but were in danger of overloading the Spectrum's signal bus. The monitor and printer take negligable power (although you don't say what kind of interfaces you are using), and the Microdrives only take significant power intermittently. The AMX interface is similarly frugal. However, as it does have a printer interface built-in, you can replace whatever it is that you're currently (sorry) using to drive the Epson with it and everything should be OK. OK?*

Printerface

Recently I bought a secondhand Epson MP-80 printer. What sort of connection does it have on the back, and what sort of interface do I need for between it and my 48K Spectrum?

Kahlin Shohail
Khamis Mushayt
Saudi Arabia

● *Another quickie – it's a Centronics or parallel connection. I use a Ramprint interface; see this magazine for Ram Electronic's advertisement, or write to Unit 16, Redfields Industrial Park, Redfield Lane, Church Crookham, Aldershot, Hants UK GU13 0RE*

Hear that pin!

I 've recently bought a 128K+2, and I also own an old Tandy DMP105 dot-matrix printer which has both Centronics and serial RS232C capability. I'm currently using them together with a Tasman Centronics interface, but I'd like to use the RS232.

I've got the lead and plugs, but the Tandy's signal names are different from the Sinclair, so I don't know how to wire them together. Can you help?

S Dewhurst
Bolton
Lancs

● *RS232 is a serial which will run and run. R A Collins of wonderful Plymouth also asked about the DMP105, and 'cos I'm from Tamerton Foliot of that city I'll sort this out. Connect as follows. . .*

Tandy	*128K/128K+2*
Pin 1 =	*–*
2 =	*4*
3 =	*1*
4 =	*3*

Cynics shot

I 've just brought a new Spectrum 128K+2, and I'm having some trouble with it. Nearly every time I load a game and start playing it the computer resets itself or the display comes out in different colour squares. I was wondering it this was normal, and if not what's wrong with it.

David Gilmore
Luton
Beds

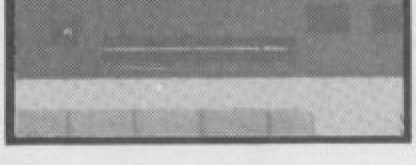
● *Cynics will say that this is perfectly normal behaviour for a Spectrum. While I arrange to have them shot, let me assure you that you have a very sick Spectrum indeed, and a replacement should be acquired from the place of purchase toot sweet*

Turbo probs

I own a Spectrum 128K+2. I'm experiencing loading problems with some of my programs, especially the Turbo or Fastload variety. The only way I can see of solving this without invalidating my warranty is by connecting in some way a tape recorder to the back of the computer by the edge connector. Is this possible, if so how and if not could you give me an alternative solution?

Paul D Milne
Forfar
Scotland

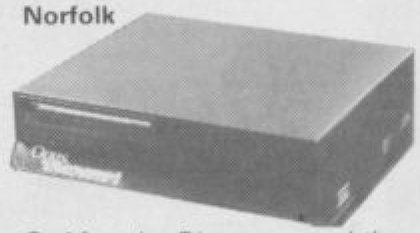
● *Scotland isn't really near Plymouth, but I'll answer it anyway. . . You could cook up some electronics which mimics the 128K+2's internal tape circuitry and sits on the back of the expansion I/O connector, but it wouldn't work particularly well, if at all. The tape signals themselves aren't taken out to this connector, so a plain tape recorder wouldn't help. So it's the standard answer, I'm afraid: try cleaning the tapehead with a cotton bud and white spirit, take the computer back to the shop for realignment (it can help if you take along a problem tape), or get the tapes replaced with better recordings. After all, it's them that are at fault!*



Some Discovery

I 've recently replaced my Spectrum Plus with a Spectrum 128K, and would like to upgrade my Discovery 1 to suit. However, the reply to my enquiry from Opus states that they are 'discontinuing this range of models', and have no further advice on the upgrade. Do you know of any source of supply for the up-grade?

N Timson
Norwich
Norfolk



● *After the Discovery and the Disciple, now the Discontinued. . . I've been carrying out some furtive enquiries about the Discovery Rom (which is the only component needed to carry out the upgrade). It transpires that Opus don't own the copyright on it, and there's a chance that up-grades might become available from another source. If everyone who might be interested writes to me c/o* SU. *I'll carry on the sleuthing*

More Midi

Since you guys run such a terrific mag, I have a few good questions for you:

1. I am thinking of buying a Midi for my 48K Spectrum, and I don't know what keyboard to buy. I've currently got a Casio MT70, this doesn't have a Midi port but has an input for a bar reader. Could it work with Midi?
2. I also want to buy a Disciple interface. Will it work with Apple 5 ¼ inch drives and an Apple DMB?

Shafeeq Hameed
Khaldiya
Kuwait

● *Since you wrote such a terrific letter, I have a few good answers for you. Firstly, the best budget keyboard for Midi is the peerless CZ-101. There are also a few good secondhand bargains about and the legendary Yamaha DX-7 is due for a price drop now that the DX-7 II is out. The MT-70 can't work with Midi.*

Apple disc drives are a standard all their own. The Disciple will only work with more modern drives. You should have more luck with the Apple printer. Although you don't say which model it is, it will probably have a standard interface on it

NEXT MONTH



Verily we take no prisioners!!

OOer what a biggun!

'Ooer what a big one' – that's what MPs of all parties were saying last night as the SU Democratic collective won every single parliamentary seat except Penge West (retained by a tiny majority by the Keep Britain Tidy Latin American Dance Team).

"It's the biggest win we've ever seen" said ousted opposition MPs".

"They certainly stuffed us an' no mistake", said a humbled Margaret Thatcher. "I was wrong all along."

The SU party won its victory as a direct result of its August Edition and a number of specific election promises outlined last night by key Cabinet spokesmen.

Minister of Fashion: Sir James Douglas "OK listen to this, from now on tomorrow starts today and today is already too late – get the picture."

Minister of Transport: Dr Graham Taylor outlined plans for his department "Basically anybody with a moped that looks even slightly dodgy will get their licence revoked and anybody with stickers in their cars saying 'Tel and Gina' or 'My other car's a Porsche' or 'Capri owners do it under the bonnet at weekends' will be sentenced to six months imprisonment or exile on Canvey Island."

Minister of Environment: Gareth 'Axeman' Jones "Trendy people, disco music and people in duffle coats had better watch out – my team of helicopter gunships is ready to deal with all offenders"

Law and Order Minister Rt Hon Tamara Howard: "Previous governments have given wayward kids short sharp shocks – we're going for pushy old ladies in queues."

Meanwhile the SU August Edition promises to break the mould of British computer magazine publishing:

Our five point manifesto:

1) Tsch, Tsch, berbomp, chack we derderder bomp give you dedede the definitive bebomp guide to all the best music available on the Spectrum che che che shuck. Bomp.

2) An ultra-wizzo feast for Graphics Adventure Creator and PAW users – we give you powerful new editing tools.

3) More Pokes, full colour maps and playing tips for major games.

4) Competitions with absolutely brilliant prizes (worth serious amounts of money).

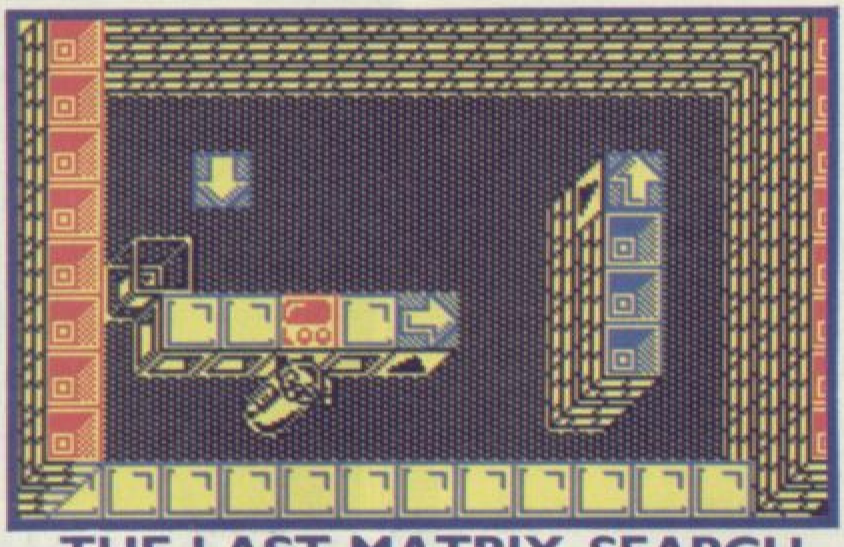
5) Loadsa reviews and previews of some absolutely mega new products (our lips are sealed).

The SU party

(the kind your mother told you not to go to)

Register your Vote

July 18th



THE LAST MATRIX SEARCH

Going on holiday is a fraught business. There's the milk and the papers to cancel. A spare key to give to the next door neighbours. Someone to come in and feed the cat. And just when you think you've got it all under control, you go and get hi-jacked by the Cratons!

The Final Matrix from Gremlin is a simple story about the poor old Bioptons who, whilst on the intergalactic equivalent of a day trip to Margate, get ambushed and scattered around the galaxy on the Craton prison matrices. I smell a rescue mission. And a rescue there undoubtedly is.

Nimrod, the Biopton equivalent of *The Equaliser* is sent in, all on his lonesome, to rescue the prisoners. In order to do so, he has to dodge the energy draining squares, the nasty cratons who are determined to do him in, and all the other little things that tend to get in the way of a rescue mission. Coming to his aid are TV screens, energy squares, and a thrust pack.

From the screen shots and the demo tape that we've seen, The Final Matrix looks exceptionally good. The graphics are clear and large, and controlling Nimrod is whacky in the extreme. He carries on moving when you've let go of the joystick! (It's all to do with momentum, but we'll have a closer look at that when the time comes.)

The Final Matrix looks as if it's going to be a very, very nice game. So give us your best shot Gremlin, we're ready for it!

Streetdate: June.
Price: to be announced



NEW VIEWPOINT ON TEAM SPIRIT

Hup, Hup, Strike Three, you're out!!! (And whatever it is that basketball players shout when they're playing basketball).

There's nothing like a good sports simulation we always say, so Activision has given us three. And they're pretty exciting. So we kidnapped some of Activision's agents and interrogated them in a dark cellar.

We've seen sports simulations before, we cried, evilly. What's so different about yours, matey boy? Bet you've never seen sports simulations like these chaps, they yelled back. Each game offers real team spirit. (So, we said, is that it)? No, they wept. You get a strange and unheard of viewpoints. (Viewpoints what are you talking about, boys)? Take the football, take the football for instance. You get an in-helmet perspective, so you really feel that you're down on the field. (Urm, we murmured. Not bad, tell us something else). We've got big league action they sobbed, we're talking really big. (So, we crooned, rather coming around to the idea of this one, anything else our readers ought to know about this one before we wind up this little preview-ette)? There's basketball, it's great, you'll love it. Hup, hup? And with that, we turned them out of an aircraft over Geneva. Without parachutes.

Actually, after this little, um, interview, we felt quite pepped up, full of er, pep, and really rather, um, peppy. All that remains to be said is that it's possible to buy each of the games separately, or together as a combination sports pack. Baseball and basketball are due out any second now, and the Sports Pack and Football will follow shortly. Team spirit boys, lots of team spirit. Well done Activision.

Streetdate: now, and then.
Price: £14.99 (Sports Pack), £7.99 (Baseball, Basketball, Football)



NO-NONSENSE MUTANTS

Mutants from Ocean is a no-nonsense top-bottom scrolling space blast set far, far into the future.

In a scenario conceivably more realistic than most of the guff around at the moment, 'civilisation' (hem, hem) has been completely unable to keep up with technology. While scientists have been able to develop more absurdly destructive weapons, no-one has quite managed to realise quite how silly it all is. As a result, one of the most ferocious and costly wars ever seen has been raging for the past six hundred years. (And there was me thinking it'd be all over in four or five minutes).

You must pilot the single-seater Rainbow Warrior patrol ship in a mission to destroy the



Survivor Zero Corporation, who have been responsible for the development and distribution of the most violent, quasi-intelligent-robot monsters.

Rainbow Warrior? Yes. Very appropriate in fact that you should take the name of the Greenpeace flagship (as was), as you're part of a really right-on peace-through action group.

You also get to choose your weapons, too (Weapons? On the Rainbow Warrior, come on). From the Mothership, you are presented with a menu, and can select either missiles, torpedos or barriers which do differing things and are most useful in certain sections of the enemy complex. "Ah," I hear you mumble, "but how do you know what bit you're going to find yourself in?" Because you can choose, that's why! The next part of the menu allows you to select which of the sixteen zones to explore first.

There's also a test facility which allows you to get to grips with the controls of the ship while armed with a nearly inexhaustible supply of weapons.

Looks good.

Streetdate: June/July.
Price: £7.95



ARK! WOT'S THIS? IT'S INDIE

Well you can buckle my swash if US Gold isn't just 'bout to release Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. **Always fancied myself (hadn't we all noticed? – Ed)** as a bit of an Indie. Cracking the bullwhip, driving the battered old trucks, wearing the fantastic outfits and slugging it out with enormous and totally loopy German mechanics (well, alright, I could probably make do with the clothes and the bullwhip).

And if that sort of thing appeals to you, then I'm sure the game will too. It's a coin-op conversion that involves running around and swinging on ropes, riding in mining carts and similar things.

Not a great deal of information as yet, except that it's going to be absolutely wonderful, of course.

Streetdate: June/July
Price: £7.95



Flashpoint. is a board game that cannot be played on a board. Rather defeats the purpose I would have thought, but there's no accounting for taste. It's a strategy war game and it looks really exciting. The first part of the game is all to do with deploying your weapons from the amunition dump. (Apparently this is easier if you watch what the computer does and copy it, but that sounds a bit like cheating to me).

Other than the cheating, there's a lot of firing to do, sometimes this works and you kill people, other times it doesn't and you don't. You can pick up parts of your forces and move them about, and generally have a bit of a battle with the computer.

It's going to be possible to play with a friend or against the computer. And, if you're feeling thoroughly lazy and good for nothing, you can make the computer play against itself and put your feet up for a little bit. We wait with baited breath to see the finished product.

Streetdate: Not at all sure.
Price: That's quite a tricky one. Ocean hasn't said yet



EXOLON GAME

Hewson is batting quite a few sixes these days. Right after the excellent Zynaps we get Exolon one hell of a 'one lone spaceman against the odds' extravaganza.

One hundred and twenty-five screens of ultra-colourful, mega-detailed backgrounds with zillions of aliens and lotsa features. The game is even divided into five levels of 25 screens so it's going to keep you pretty busy.

There are transporters, enemy cell pods, gigantic missile silos, laser beams, land mines and a wide variety of wizzy aliens. You get to jump, crouch, fire laser bolts and, best of all, take out entire installations with groun-to-ground missiles which explode in a myriad particles in just about the best boom ever seen in an arcade game.

Looks great.
Streetdate: End of July.
Price: £7.95



DEATH OR GLORY

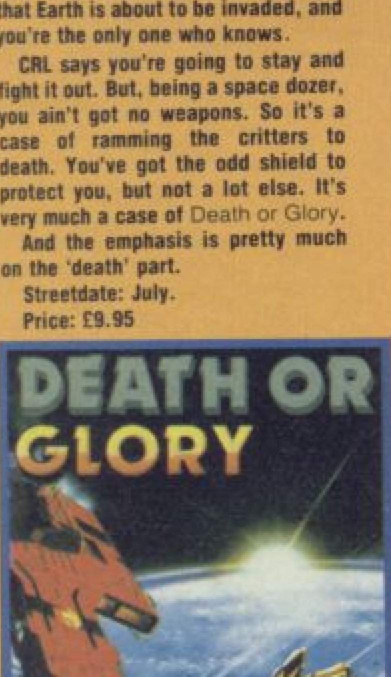
You're a space dozer. Cleaning up the asteroids, and making space a safe, clean, and generally nice place to live. You're something of a good guy in fact.

Then, all of a sudden, just as you're about to knock off your shift, you see this enemy fleet approaching at a rate of knots, and you realise that Earth is about to be invaded, and you're the only one who knows.

CRL says you're going to stay and fight it out. But, being a space dozer, you ain't got no weapons. So it's a case of ramming the critters to death. You've got the odd shield to protect you, but not a lot else. It's very much a case of Death or Glory.

And the emphasis is pretty much on the 'death' part.

Streetdate: July.
Price: £9.95





ARMA GEDDON OUTA HERE!

Wooo. Armageddon. Serious stuff. The end of the world brought about by man. That's what Martech's new game is all about.

Set in the year 2032 on an Earth in many ways similar to the way it is now. Most of the countries are the same and there are some considerably unwholly alliances in the process of being made. There are sixteen nuclear powers. If any should form an alliance that will make them more powerful than anyone else, the diplomatic balance will be thrown out, and all hell will break lose.

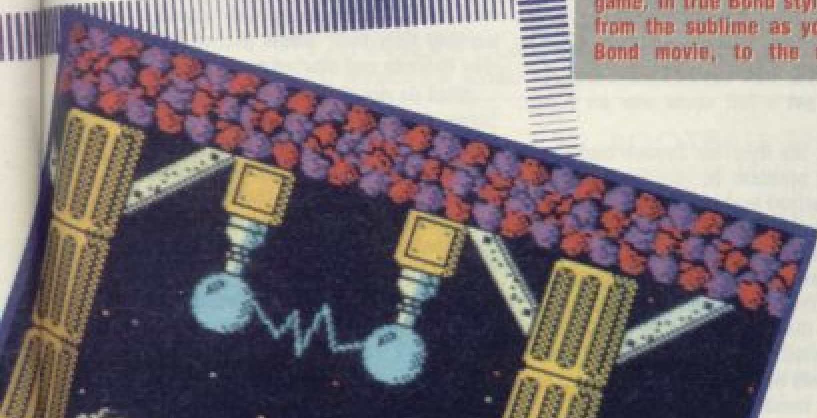
In such an ambitiously competitive society, it became impossible for peace to be maintained by any earth-bound body, as everyone had numerous vested interests. It's necessary, therefore, to find a kind of guardian – someone utterly beyond reproach to look after the affairs of the world and keep a watchful eye over everything, ensuring that war doesn't break out. (Sounds unlikely – Ed).

You must, as The Armageddon Man, control the dealings of the UNN (United Nuclear Nations) and keep a general eye on the goings on via a network of spy satellites which you can dot around the sky. They'll let you monitor any military movements on the ground.

All negotiations and requests for food, power, supplies etc are directed through the A man and he (you) has to decide whether or not to agree to their requests.

OK, so Martech's newy sounds pretty flaming desperate so far, doesn't it? Oh ye of little faith! With the package, you get an enormous map of the world, as Martech imagines it will be in the year 2032, along with a set



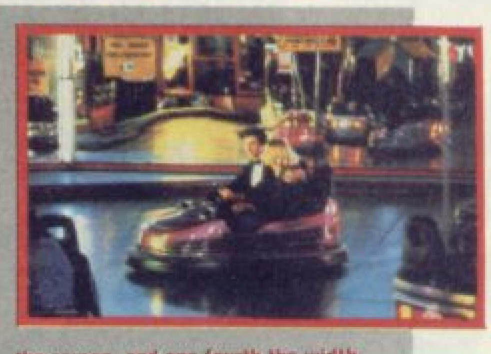


DAYLIGHTS

Domark's James Bond epic *The Living Daylights* is certainly taking it's time, isn't it? Well, now we've got some more information and a picture. Yes, a picture of Timothy "Oh why do you people ask so many questions, you'll ruin the magic of the film" Dalton and an obligatory bit of soviet fluff in a bumper car! Cooer. Sounds pretty "magical" to me.

No sign of any screen shots as yet, though we do have some information about the gameplay etc. There are ten levels, beginning on a training session where you've got to defend yourself from crack SAS people. You can also decide which weapon you want to take into each section of the game. In true Bond style, these vary from the sublime as you'll get in a Bond movie, to the ridiculous: a rocket launcher disguised as a portable stereo.





Bond is a right-to-left scrolling affair in which you have to avoid snipers which leap out from behind buildings and holes in the road. There are also helicopters and missile-throwing bad guys to defeat.

We're promised that the Bond character is one fifth the height of the screen, and one fourth the width, which actually sounds totally absurd, meaning he is fatter than he is tall.

Shooting things involves directing a pin-point sight to the target on the screen and pressing *Fire*. Doesn't actually sound too bad, does it? Shots next ish.

Streetdate: July/August.
Price £9.95

of stick-on flags which you can use to keep track of any alliances that are formed. It looks like a great package, and by the time you've worked out how to keep an eye on just about everything at once, sending and receiving messages, negotiating, trying to prevent the outbreak of war any possible ideas that strategy games are completely useless and tedious should be banished.

Obviously, the whole point of the game is to survive as long as possible before serious nuclear warfare breaks out. Minor conflicts are acceptable if they maintain an overall status quo. It's almost impossible to reach an entirely peaceful situation. You'll just have to try and last for as long as possible.

Unrighteous or villainous players can, of course, endeavour to bring about total obliteration of the planet in as short a time as possible. Heh, heh, heh.

Streetdate: July.
Price: £12.95







FRANKIE!

CRL has done it again. Following on from the notorious, hideous, '15'-rated *Dracula*, we now have the nearly-notorious, hideous, '15'-rated *Frankenstein*.

Based on the Mary Shelley novel of the same name (you may remember it, there were one or two films based on it), *Frankenstein* promises to be pretty bloody and very unsound.

As everybody knows, the demented Doctor believes he can play God and create life. Unfortunately, the life-form that slurps out of the laboratory is nasty, ugly, pretty thick and more than a little homicidal.

Frankenstein is played in three parts. Four years before the game begins, the dopey Doctor lost his monster, following the murder of his sister. Part One deals with Frankenstein's search for the monster, in order to avenge the brutal murder. Part Two involves killing the critter. Part Three is the touching and humanitarian bit. You play the monster, and, as you increase your IQ you can find out exactly why you became a homicidal maniac in the first place. And once you've found all that out, presumably you can carry on and be a crazed maniac a bit more.

If *Frankenstein* really derserves its 15 certificate, which *Dracula* didn't then it should be very nasty indeed. And even if it doesn't, this return to the spirit of the original Mary Shelley story looks like it's going to be a great game.

Streetdate: June.
Price: £9.99

PREVIEW





It's compilation time! Yee Hah! Compilations don't thrill the cockles of journalists very much but they are good for the software houses who get to off-load old(ish) products and good for the public who get games that are usually no worse than OK and sometimes superb and dead cheap. Anyway there are at least four hot looking packs coming up.

Computer Hits 5 from Beau Jolly includes the seriously OK Wizard's Lair the much under rated Starstrike II and 2112AD Mantronix and Attack of the Killer Tomatoes. All for £9.95.

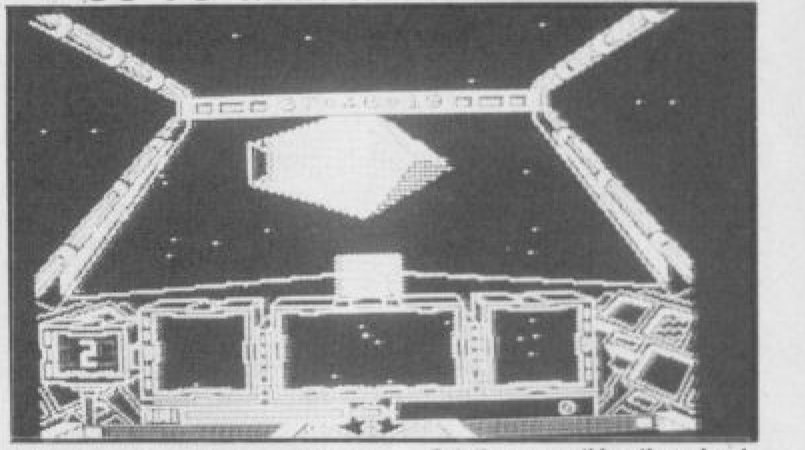
Mikro-Gen's Classic Collection features the fairly dull Stainless Steel, the rather good Battle of the Planets, the luke warm Frost Byte and Pyjamarama which is colour clash a-go-go with big sprites. £9.95.

Five Star Games – another from Beau Jolly, brings you the excellent (though on at least some versions bugged) Dandy, Cauldron II (great stuff), the mighty Quazatron, the superb Alien Highway (which is not – as the blub says – 'vastly superior' to Highway Encounter) but still good and the OK Strike Force Cobra.

Best of 3D we told you about last month contains some of Vortex's best stuff and is out now!!!!!

Streetdate: (for the lot) Now!!

GO TO WAR WITH STAR FOX



You know how it is. You start off with a minor disagreement, a little bit of bickering, a small amount of name calling, the odd thump here and there, and before you know it, you've got a full scale war on your hands.

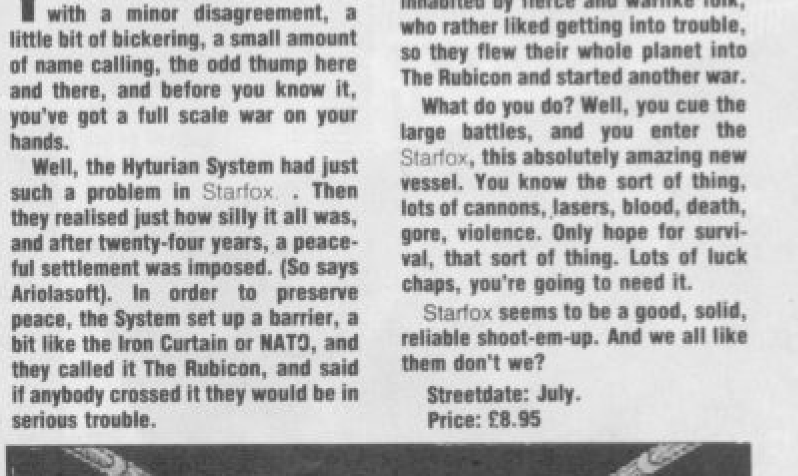
Well, the Hyturian System had just such a problem in Starfox. . Then they realised just how silly it all was, and after twenty-four years, a peaceful settlement was imposed. (So says Ariolasoft). In order to preserve peace, the System set up a barrier, a bit like the Iron Curtain or NATO, and they called it The Rubicon, and said if anybody crossed it they would be in serious trouble.

But there was this other planet, inhabited by fierce and warlike folk, who rather liked getting into trouble, so they flew their whole planet into The Rubicon and started another war.

What do you do? Well, you cue the large battles, and you enter the Starfox, this absolutely amazing new vessel. You know the sort of thing, lots of cannons, lasers, blood, death, gore, violence. Only hope for survival, that sort of thing. Lots of luck chaps, you're going to need it.

Starfox seems to be a good, solid, reliable shoot-em-up. And we all like them don't we?

Streetdate: July.
Price: £8.95



"LET'S KILL SOME ALIENS" NO 47: SLAP FIGHT

Slap Fight is another Taito coin-op conversion from the guys at Ocean and, if it's as good as Arkanoid, it's got a sure-fire hit on its hands.

Slap Fight comprises two essentially simple elements of gameplay. First, there's the straightforward top-to-bottom scrolling shoot-out part, with waves of swirly twirly aliens swooping around and bombing you, which would be boring if it wasn't so damned addictive. Then there is a feature which is largely similar to the way things worked in Arkanoid: when you shoot certain aliens, they explode into tiny star-shaped things. On picking up one of these, a message will flash at the bottom of the screen indicating which of the numerous bonus facilities can be employed by hitting *Fire*.

For example, some stars will multiply your speed by five, others offer temporary invincibility from attack.

Thankfully, as some of the options are decidedly useless at certain points in the game (going five times faster than usual in a complex area, for example) you can decide to not opt for the bonus.

Slap Fight's success or otherwise will rest largely on its speed. If it's as slick as Arkanoid, we'll have a seriously addictive arcade game. On the other hand if it's at all sluggish, it will be exactly the same as lots of other stuff.

Streetdate: June/July.
Price: £7.95

CHICKENS ETC

Matthew Smith is *back!!!* The man who sent thousands of gamers completely round the twist with the Kong Strikes Back screen in Manic Miner has returned from wherever he has been for the past three years to inflict horrible mental torture with his latest creation; *Attack of the Mutant Zombie Flesh Eating Chickens From Mars.*

Speedy scrolling roads with some trucks and some birds and a dog (for that's what the game entails) may not sound like the makings of a wonderful epic but, technically, it's pretty damned neat.

The graphics are enormous, and everything zooms around at impressive speed. It's looking very good, and, let's face it, it's been three years in the making, and so it really ought to be.

Gameplay-wise it seems a little freaky, as it seems to involve not a great deal other than running left and right on the screen and trying not to get either run down by a truck or bombed by a chicken.

Streetdate: July.
Price: £5.95

BOUNDER ON THE REBOUND

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A: Lots of SU readers. Explanation? Read on...

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"Coo!" (See?)

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"Wow!"

Therer are 18 levels of all-action scrolling, each of which must be survived if you are to reach the Master Alien at the end of the game. And we're promised that it's going to be even more difficult and addictive than it's predecessor.

"Great!"

Oh, what's this? It's Gremlin on the phone saying that maybe we shouldn't tell anyone about Re-Bounder as it's been delayed for quite a while (ie nearly forever).

"Oh." Oh, indeed.

Streetdate: Haven't a clue.
Price: Probably around £7.95

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MATTHEW SMITH C.O.D.E. T.A.L.K.



Matthew Smith was the person who, three years ago, created cult classics such as Manic Miner **and** Jet Set Willy. **Now he's back, with** Attack of the Mutant Zombie Flesh Eating Chickens From Mars. **We tracked down the underground hero in a warren of industrial development units in Liverpool**

Matthew Smith is a funny sort of person. He's very difficult to describe. After **Jet Set Willy** established him as a major programming talent, he disappeared for nearly three years without trace. Among (wholly unqualified) accusations of chemically induced '60s psychedelia and general physical collapse, the notorious coder responsible for the creation of moderately warped concepts such as Eugene's Lair in **Manic Miner** vanished. Nothing was heard or seen of Smith for years. **Attack of the Mutant Zombie Flesh Eating Chickens from Mars** has been three years – on and off – in the making and it's every bit as weird as the other Smith creations. Sitting in a Liverpool eaterie, he talked about his decidedly shadey initial encounters with computers, and his unexpectedly refined eating tastes.

VITAL DETAILS

What have you been doing since **JSW** in '84?
I've been working on Chickens **and also a mega-project. I've got the plot worked out and so far I'm up to Chapter 3 in the novella that's going to come with it. It's set in the 24th century and you'll be able to play the part of anyone in the town where the action takes place. Basically the machines and bombs and things have become intelligent, and don't want to be used for war any more.**

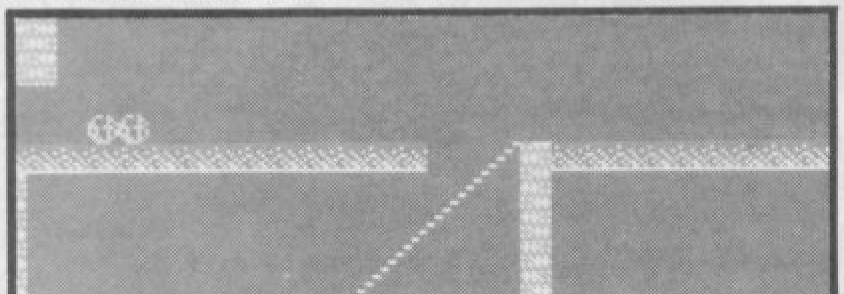
Which other programmers do you admire?
Bill Hogue from California. He works for Big 5 Software. He wrote Miner 2049'er **which inspired** Manic Miner **to a certain extent, but he also did some fantastic things on the TRS 80, proving that you can still have great games on a computer with lousy graphics. The Spectrum was a dream compared with the TRS. Mike Singleton and Jeff Minter have to get a mention too.**

Favourite programs?
An old favourite is Ultima II **from Microprose. It's a traditional hack and slash role-playing game.** Buried Bucks **is great too, it was printed in a magazine ages ago, and involves a little helicopter. It's a bit difficult to explain, but it was great.**

What arcade games do you score highest on?
I don't really play them all that often. I like to watch other people play, as they're often better at them than I am.

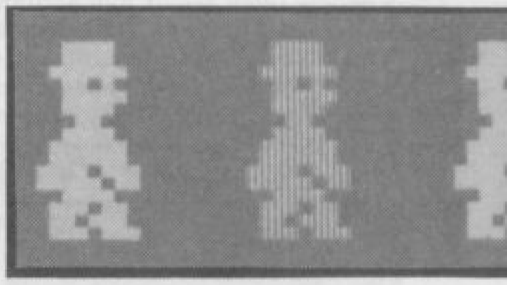
Favourite food and drink?
I like Italian food – all herbs and spices. Chinese is good too. I can't stand American. I'd like to become a vegetarian, but haven't quite made it yet.





What program would you most like to have written?
Cyberrun. **It's terribly dull, I know, but the graphics are great.**

Programming ambition?
I really want to get this megagame sorted out. After that I'd like to program the orbit details



into my spaceship computer. I want to be a starship captain.

Favourite TV show/records/books
I like things with spaceships in them. All romantic novels are just soft-porn so I don't bother with them. I like Moody Blues and Pink Floyd's music, anything that's a bit psychedelic. I like Genesis too.

Hobbies?
Reading, boogying and riding my bike.

Worst subject at school?
English Lit. It was the only exam that I turned up for and failed.

Who did you vote for?
Labour (although I'm a Liberal) .

Best thing about the Spectrum?
It's cheap, and it's got better graphics than the ZX81.

SOFTOLOGY: Styx (*Bug Byte,* 1983), Manic Miner (*Bug Byte,* 1983), Jet Set Willy (*Software Projects,* 1984), Attack of the Mutant Zombie Flesh-eating Chickens From Mars (*Software Projects,* 1987)

You may remember a couple of months back Gremlin implied that the very next issue of **SU** would contain a free game worth £9.99 but that the magazine would cost £10.99. This was a joke. Most people seem to have realised this but Gremlin was stunned to discover that large numbers of people (well about five actually) took it literally. Consequently Gremlin wishes to announce that next issue of **SU** will come free with a +3 worth £250 – special one month only cover prices £251. OK. [Any sentences of any sort made in the rest of this month's Gremlin which are anything other than strictly true will end with a special symbol:(*)]



Gremlin has just recovered from the Election (*) (this was written ages before the results). Gremlin asked the party leaders for their views on computer software:

M. Thatcher (67) "One has a BBC because that is a very expensive computer and ordinary people can't afford it but I like a good shoot-em-up.

N Kinnock (12) "We in the labour party have all got networked ZX81's because they're crummy but everyone can afford them. I like games where nobody wins".

The David Brothers (28) "We like everything. Or not. Don't we David?" "No we don't actually David I like to kill things and you like dull utility programs".

"Sorry David."

The hilarious names of these characters from an Election game are Party Leader Matcher, The Quoon and Party Leader Ninnock.(Ha, Ha, Ha) (*)

DOCTOR WRITES



Hello there. This month I'd like to talk to all you software houses who thought it would be a good idea to release a program based on the Election. You thought the idea up in the pub and now you're probably up to your eyes in very bad puns based on the names of the political leaders and you've probably spent serious amounts of money hiring the *Splitting Image* puppets for publicity photos.

Here is Gremlin's tip: Don't release it, don't send it out for review, it's going to be terrible and you'll lose a lot of money. Scrap the whole project before it's too late. . .

Next month: Handy tips from Gremlin on how not to buy **The Great Space Race** (*)





Star Trek Watch
Stardate *22:2456:87112*
The ST version is completely ready and the Spectrum version will be out any day (*)



GREMLIN TOP TEN INDUSTRY FAVOURITES(*)
1. Alan Sugar
2. Nick Kamen
3. Norman Fowler
4. Michelle from East Enders
5. Norman Wisdom
6. Quentin Crisp
7. George from Rainbow
8. Chris Quentin
9. Elizabeth Archer
10. Champman Pincher (brother of Doberman)

Whatever you say about the Amstrad the truth is always more bizarre. Gremlin confidently and cynically predicted that when all the details about the + 3 emerged there would be no chance of an Amstrad stand alone drive for the +2 to make it possible to upgrade. But could anyone have foreseen what has actually happened, a possibility so mind bogglingly indifferent to all the existing Spectrum owners it's almost sublime: There is to be a stand alone disc drive but only as an addition to the +3 it won't work with the + 2!!. For once Gremlin is speechless and will retire into a Buddhist monastery there to study the innermost cosmic secrets of Alan Sugar (*).

LAST MONTHS COMPO

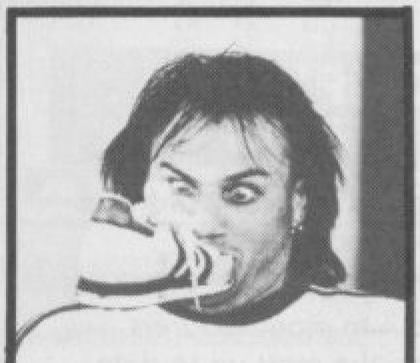
Last month's Caption comp drew a large number of not very good entries and a small number of not bad ones. Dear old Pete was staring gormlessly out of a picture of some football game. Many people made puns on Saving (goals and programs), and not a few managed to be disparging about **World Cup Carnival** – always welcome.

In the event the winner (excluding some very obscene ones) was the deeply cruel "Okay so I've been form lately but this is inhuman" which seemed to Gremlin to capture the essential tragedy behind Shilton's smile. The standard wodge of money goes to Mark Phillips of Swindon.



Gremlin

GREMLIN CAPTION COMPO NO 9



★★★★★★★★★

This month Gremlin brings you possibly the most difficult Caption compo ever. Take a look at this picture. Yes it is what you thought it was. A large man with a shoe in his mouth. Now who can come up with a witty caption of what the man might be saying (trying to say) or thinking or even, more bizarrely, what the shoe is thinking. Closing date for the competitjon is August 3rd. OK?.

★★★★★★★★★

Suggestions to: Gremlin Caption Competition No 9, Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30/32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU

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Address ....

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Caption ....

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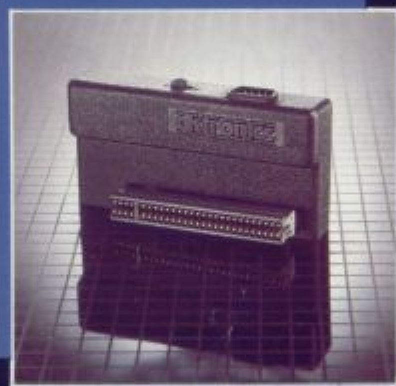
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